HENRY

DE

BEAUVAIS.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CHAP. XXI.

JULIA and her deliverer, having finiſhed their narratives, our travellers agreed to ſpend the night at the hermitage, dreading leſt they might a ſecond time fall in with the banditti.

There were two rooms in the hermit's cottage, and it was ſettled that the ladies ſhould take poſſeſſion of the inner one, in which there was a bed, while the men ſhould manage as well as they could in the outer apartment, without any other matraſs than dried leaves, or any other covering than their cloaths.

Julia was delighted with the ſociety of Olivia; and ſhe, however ſhe might ſuffer within, did her utmoſt to appear contented. It is true, that a ſigh would ſometimes ſteal from her as ſhe perceived the ſoft glances and the expreſſive attentions which de Beauvais manifeſted for Julia, and which were ſo different from the cold affection with which he treated her. She repreſſed, however, as much as poſſible, thoughts ſhe deemed traytors to virtue, and reſolved with herſelf to retire into another convent as ſoon as ſhe could.

The perſonal charms, and mental excellencies of the two fair wanderers were of ſomewhat a different caſt. Olivia was tall and majeſtic in her figure, and all her actions were attended with a mild dignity, the effect of which upon the heart, it is impoſſible to deſcribe. Her ſhape was ſymmetry itſelf, yet ſo elegantly luxurious, as to fill the

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ſoul at firſt ſight with the warmeſt alarms. Every feature of her face, performed the office of an interpreter to her heart; and the joy which throbbed or the ſorrow which depreſſed it, were marked by the kindling or melting of her eye, by the gentle fluſh or ſnowy paleneſs of her cheek, more eloquently than they could have been by the happieſt language. Her countenance was ſweet, yet animated; her eyes were gentle, yet ſparkling with the vivid rays of health; her lips glowed with a luſcious ſplendour, which it would be injuſtice to compare with any colour that nature, in ſportive variety, has ſpread over the flowers of the earth, or the firmament of heaven; her teeth, her noſe, her chin, in ſhort every feature of her face, ſeemed framed ſo perfect as to ſtruggle with the reſt for preeminence in beauty; and her eyes claimed the ſuperiority alone, from the more expreſ-

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ſive ſympathy they could boaſt to hold with her mind.

Julia was alſo beautiful; ſhe was ſmall in her perſon, but exquiſitely well proportioned; her face was expreſſive of life and ſpirit; her eyes rolled with the rapidity of light, and evinced the vivacity and ardour of her mind; her ſmile was as delicately voluptuous as that of the Idalian goddeſs, and the man who could unmoved behold the heavings of her lovely boſom might boaſt of a command over his paſſions, with which ſtoic philoſophy cannot inveſt its poſſeſſor.

In their tempers and manners they were equally different. Olivia was always cheerful and naturally gay, but her ſpirits were never exceſſive, and ſhe was fond of reflection. The ſpirits of Julia were more unequal; her vivacity flaſhed like the coruſcations of the north, brilliant

brilliant but temporary. She acted leſs from thought, than from the ſudden impulſes of a warm heart, which ſometimes hurried her into that kind of amiable indiſcretion that extorts approbation while it is followed by misfortune. But her mind quick of apprehenſion, and replete with the ſtores of fancy, was incapable of being long depreſſed by the moſt untoward accidents; like a recoiling ſpring, it rebounded from diſtreſs, and reaſſumed its wonted animation.

Olivia had always cautiouſly avoided giving the ſlighteſt encouragement to any man whom ſhe did not intend to favour. Julia had no ſuch ſcruples, but regarded the generality of men as moths, who, if they would run into the flame, deſerved to be burned. In this they both judged from their own hearts. The former felt for the unutterable miſeries which attend forlorn or unrequited love;

love; while the latter affirmed the uneaſineſs of diſappointed paſſion to be like the terrors of a dream, which a hearty ſhake and a little rubbing of the eyes would get rid of. But the mind of Olivia was peculiarly calculated to derive glory from adverſity; and like the brilliant to gain luſtre from the gloom. In her ſympathiſing mind the afflicted boſom would find a pillow to repoſe its cares on; and her ſoul, attuned with gentle pity, could like the harp of David charm away the evil ſpirit of melancholy; while the animated talents and brilliant hilarity of Julia were chiefly adapted to fill up the diapaſon in the full harmony of proſperity.

Such were the two heroines of our work: whatever opinion the reader may form of them, we cannot preſume to foretel; but the hermit, who was no indifferent judge of human nature, gave the preference completely to Mademoiſelle

ſelle de Clarange. This old man was really very good natured, but having in his youth ſuffered much from the ingratitude of mankind, he had, in the heat of his reſentment, retired from the world, and aſſumed the appearance of miſanthropy. Still, however, he was ſo much the ſubject of his original temper, as to be both mild and humane to thoſe whom he loved; and as he was highly pleaſed with his preſent gueſts, he gave them the following ſketch of his ſtory, to paſs away the hours until the time ſhould arrive for retiring to repoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

I WAS born near Caen in Normandy. The eſtate which I inherited from my anceſtors was pretty conſiderable; my father and mother unfortunately died when I was young; and it has been my misfortune ever ſince to have met with people who have profeſſed the greateſt affection for me, and who in proportion to the warmth of their declarations have always done me the greateſt injuries.

The two firſt perſons whom I have to put upon this liſt, were my guardian and my *valet de chambre*. The former ſeemed to think that it was his duty to act

act the part of a father to me as far as warm profeſſions would go, but that of a guardian in pillaging me of my eſtate.

As to my valet, I cannot ſo much blame him; flattery was his profeſſion, and he could alone hope to live by feeding the vices and ſoothing the weakneſſes of his maſter. As my guardian permitted me to retain a ſervant when young, I am certain that I owe to him every rudiment of vice which has ſince found footing in my mind. He puffed up my vanity by his praiſes, and augmented my evil inclinations by contriving means for the gratification of all my paſſions.

I was then about eighteen years old, and he was my chief friend and the prime mover of all my actions, until one day I overheard him talking to a miſtreſs to whom he had introduced

me. To her he ridiculed me for the want of thoſe qualifications which I have heard him ſwear to my face I poſſeſſed above any man in France. He decried my underſtanding, and boaſted of his addreſs in cheating me of my money.

I diſcharged my perfidious attendant with ſome reproaches for his duplicity. His reply as he was quitting me was however juſt, "the poor, ſir, can only live by pleaſing the rich: if they are only to be pleaſed by being flattered, they are themſelves the cauſe of that duplicity, which we, who muſt live by them, are forced to commit."

My guardian, as I approached the termination of my minority, ſeemed to have his fondneſs for me encreaſed. He talked to me often about my eſtate, and his own frugality; and he uſed always

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to conclude with a warm ſhake of the hand, and a declaration that I would be wiſe in continuing to entruſt the management of my affairs to him. Young and inexperienced, I eſteemed myſelf happy to have met with ſuch a prodigy as an honeſt guardian; and I was ſatisfied with receiving money from him when ever I wanted it, without enquiring any thing more about the matter.

During this time, it was my chance to contract a friendſhip with a young man of the name of Tilly. He poſſeſſed no fortune; I conſidered, however, that that deficiency was amply recompenſed in the treaſures of his heart and underſtanding. He ſeemed to have no will, no idea except what was identically the ſame with mine. He uſed to call himſelf my Pylades, my Achates; nay, ſwore with ſolemnity, that it would be

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the height of his wiſhes to ſubſtitute his life for mine, if endangered, as Pythias would have done for his Damon. Here, thought I, is the true ſpirit of ancient amity; here is real diſintereſtedneſs; here is that ſimilarity of ſentiment and reaſon, which is the baſis of an everlaſting friendſhip.

In return for ſuch profeſſions, I could not but ſhew myſelf equally capable of that divine paſſion. We had but one purſe between us; and as I generally filled it, he uſually emptied it. I was, however, too much a friend to attend to ſuch a circumſtance.

By means of my friend, who was conſtantly infuſing into me ſuſpicions of my late guardian, I became earneſt to have my affairs ſurrendered into my own hands, and to have an account of the ſums received and expended during my minority

minority laid before me. My guardian at firſt put me off with his uſual profeſſions of regard; but finding me obſtinately bent upon obtaining my demand, he at length produced me an account, which ſtated me as conſiderably in his debt, notwithſtanding that he had received the profits of my eſtate during a long minority.

How he made this out I never could rightly underſtand. A court of juſtice, however, adjudged the matter in his favour, and I was obliged to acquieſce in its decree. One article in his bill I well remember, it was the making me pay five hundred livres as his charge for collecting four hundred for me.

I had however, now gotten my eſtate into my own hands, and my dear friend Tilly ſeemed more aſſiduous than ever in his diſplay of affection to me. Out

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of regard to my convenience, he would have taken upon him the trouble of attending to my affairs: I had, however, too great a reſpect to my friend's eaſe to burthen him with ſo much fatigue: I had the management, and we ſhared the profits.

One day he came to inform me that he had been made a very advantageous offer of entering into a commercial ſpeculation, which would enrich him immenſely. But ſaid he, looking at me earneſtly, I am obliged to decline it for want of money: I careleſsly aſked the ſum required, and the converſation there dropped. In a few days he renewed the ſubject, when I counted down to him the ſum mentioned; to procure which, I had been obliged to mortgage one half of my eſtate. He received it with the warmeſt eulogies on my truly claſſical friendſhip, and declared that

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my conduct revived the noble examples of Greek and Roman virtues in these degenerate days. He pocketed the money, and I was content with the approbation I received in lieu of it.

My guardian had died before the event of my friend's project could be known, and left an only daughter, who was rich and handsome. As we had lived long in the same house, and had contracted a regard for each other, I paid my addresses to her. But my dear friend, in the extravagance of his regard for me, seemed willing to procure me an all perfect wife. For this reason he was continually finding fault with the conduct of the lady to whom I was dedicating my services. The charges that he brought against her were, it is true, very often extremely trifling and ill founded; I attributed this, however, to his anxiety, that my wedded life might

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be perfectly happy, and in some degree also to a good natured weakness in him, as being jealous, without his knowing it, of a rival in my affections.

My friend perceived that all his influence over me was vainly exercised to attempt the cooling of my affection for the daughter of my late guardian; for the voice of friendship is but deafly heard, and its influence poor indeed, when put in competition with the powers of beauty and the force of love. He therefore suddenly became very assiduous in his visits there, and when I used sometimes to rally him on it, he would reply earnestly, that he could have no inducement for going, except to further my suit. I perceived indeed that Mademoiselle Tervire did not seem very fond of him, but I knew not what to attribute that to, except his being rather ugly in his face and person.

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At length the time came that Tilly's ſcheme ſhould produce ſuch golden returns. He informed me, with a long face, that all was loſt. He would then have had me venture my remaining fortune in the ſame manner: but I had now the intereſt and approbation of another perſon to conſult beſides his and my own; I therefore refuſed, but promiſed that he ſhould never want a ſhare of my income. He thanked me rather coolly, and ſhortly after went to take poſſeſſion (as he ſaid) of the fortune of a rich uncle who had juſt died.

On his return I was ſorry to ſee that travelling had not much improved my friend. In a poor fortnight's time, he ſeemed to have become haughty and ſelf opinionative, and I could no longer boaſt that we poſſeſſed that ſimilarity of ſentiment and reaſon which is the baſis of an everlaſting friendſhip. We were

no

no longer but one ſoul animating two bodies.

I had never mentioned to Monſ. Tilly ſince he had become rich, any thing concerning clearing off the mortgage which I had laid on my eſtate, to lend the money to him. I wiſhed that it ſhould be done immediately, on account of my approaching marriage; but out of delicacy, I waited until the overtures for it ſhould come from him. He was not, however, long until he did it much to my ſurprize; he coolly propoſed to me, that as I could not expect to pay off ſuch a large ſum, I might as well diſpoſe of that part of my eſtate, and that as he wanted land, he would purchaſe it of me.

I was too much ſhocked at his propoſal to be able to reply to it; I turned on my heel and left him, lamenting that our eternal friendſhip was no more,

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and ſeeing at laſt that the man who had ſhared my fortune, and whom I had idolized in my heart, had ever ſince the commencement of our acquaintance, regarded and treated me as an abſolute ideot, who lived only to be duped.

I went immediately to Mademoiſelle de Tervire's to unburthen my grief to her. Before, however, I had opened the ſubject to her, ſhe put a letter into my hands, ſaying "ſee how you have been deceived:" it was from Tilly, full of declarations of a paſſion, which it ſeems he had often pleaded to her, while he made me fancy that he was only arguing my ſuit. Stung to the quick at ſuch complicated baſeneſs, I reſolved to take ample vengeance. I ſent a procurator to demand the repayment of the ſum I had lent him. He refuſed it with many expreſſions of horror at my diſhoneſty and ingratitude in making ſuch a demand. I was obliged to appeal a ſecond

time

time to a court of juſtice, and let it be recorded to its honour, that I met with a remedy there.

Having thus recovered my money, I gratified my reſentment with taking perſonal ſatisfaction on my falſe friend, and made him confeſs that the legacy he had pretended to receive from his uncle, was the very money which he had made me raiſe for him to employ in commerce, and which he had never put to that uſe.

I married Mademoiſelle Tervire a ſhort time afterwards, and for ſome years enjoyed a good deal of happineſs. That part of mankind who are diſtinguiſhed for what is called a knowledge of the world, or who, to uſe a plainer and more intelligible language, are verſed in the art of villainy, would no doubt from my paſt conduct deem me little ſhort of a downright ideot; this, however,

ever, was far from being the caſe; I had as much ſenſe as the generality of mankind, all my error was, that preſuming to judge from my own heart, I believed every man, until I found him to be a villain, to poſſeſs common honeſty.

Of this capital error, however, a communication with the world gradually cured me. I could relate many adventures which tended to give me a proper notion of my own ſpecies, but the time is too ſhort, and I muſt haſten to relate to you the event which drove me finally into this ſolitary habitation.

One remark, however, I muſt communicate for the benefit of you young people, who have not been converſant enough in life to have made it. It is, that when any one ſacrifices his own vanity to the gratification of your's, it is ſolely for the ſake of ſelf intereſt.

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From the prime minister to the shopman, gestures full of respect bespeak a wish to cozen; a low bow denotes a deep design on your estate; but if you are absolutely praised, set down the sycophant as an open and determined pick-pocket.

During my experience in life, I had seen that money and ambition were the sources of most pretended friendships: I resolved therefore to contract an intimacy with no man who I thought could seek my acquaintance for interested purposes.

I held myself fortunate when I grew intimate with a nobleman who was too wealthy and too powerful to seek my intimacy on such accounts. He had done me a signal piece of service once, and gratitude made him dear to me. I now felicitated myself on possessing a true friend, and a wife who instead of

abating

abating in her affection for me, as is but too generally the cuſtom with modern wives, ſeemed every day to ſet leſs bounds to her love.

But alas! how was I deceived! Going one morning ſuddenly into her bedchamber, ſhe flew to embrace and kiſs me with unuſual ardour; I ſtarted a little back from her, I know not why, and perceived that all her ſyren fondneſs was intended merely to amuſe me, until my dear friend, her paramour ſhould eſcape out of the room.

As his appearance and undreſs left me no room to doubt of their guilt and my diſgrace, I grew frantic with rage, I flung the viper of my boſom madly from me, and drawing my ſword called upon the inſidious adulterer to do me ſome way juſtice. He who dare do a wrong, if he be conſtitutionally brave,

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will not fear to juſtify it; he drew likewiſe, and we fought with a deſign that one of us ſhould die.

My wife, who had hitherto lamented the diſcovery of her ſcheme, now loſt all ſenſe of decency, and ſolicitous only for the ſafety of her paramour, conjured me to ſpare him. She flew with this intention between our ſwords, and his wounded her deeply, mine paſſing at the inſtant through his breaſt.

They both fell; and the ſervants, alarmed at the noiſe we had made, entered the room. My adverſary had ſufficient ſtrength remaining to gratify his malice, by deſiring the people to take me into cuſtody, as the murderer of him and of my own wife.

I was immediately ſecured and dragged to priſon, whence I expected to be

carried

carried ſpeedily to execution, for I knew the implacability of thoſe who could alone be witneſſes againſt me. My dear friend ſwore before the judges that I had proceeded to kill my wife, and that on his coming to her aſſiſtance I had attacked and wounded him alſo. There wanted nothing now to my condemnation except the corroborating teſtimony of my wife: to the honour of her ſex be it ſpoken, even in its utmoſt depravity it could not go ſo far; ſhe confeſſed her guilt, acquitted me, and I was accordingly liberated.

She ſoon after was attacked with a violent diſorder, and ſent to me as ſhe was dying, intreating that I would come and pronounce her forgiveneſs. Heated with my wrongs, I at firſt refuſed; at length, however, I repented of ſuch unrelenting cruelty: but it was too late; before I could reach her houſe, ſhe had

ceaſed to be an object of either pity or reſentment.

Unable to bear ſociety any longer, and having bought, by ſo many ſevere experiments, this truth, that man ſeldom wants a motive to be a villain, and that while he wants not the motive he will not want the will; I retired to this deſart, having firſt ſettled my fortune, for my own life, on a convent, and reſerved only a ſmall annuity to myſelf. I was induced to ſettle it in this way, becauſe the inſtitution is a wiſe, though partial attempt to annihilate ſociety and put an end to the human ſpecies. Here I have lived for more than thirty years; nor do I regret that I have quitted the ſociety of man for ſolitude, ſince I can ſay with Crebillon, the moſt energetic poet of France, who lived for thirty years in the ſociety of brutes; "I do it becauſe I know what man is."

CHAP. XXIII.

THE next morning, as ſoon as the company had aſſembled, it was determined that the two gentlemen ſhould proceed to the next town in ſearch of ſome carriage to convey the ladies from their preſent abode, which was both unſafe and inconvenient.

The hermit aſſented to the ſcheme; "yet," ſaid he, turning to the ladies, "I make no apologies for your entertainment; ſhould the King employ the revenues of the nation to feaſt you, he merits no greater thanks than the poor peaſant when he ſpreads his all before you.

you. If you are as wiſe as I wiſh you to be, your preſent ſufferings and neceſſities will be the ſource of improvement to you. The Almighty has ſcattered ills thick among mankind, becauſe they are the beſt preceptors of virtue. If you deem the adventures you have paſſed through extraordinary and calamitous; if you conſider your preſent fare as coarſe, and your preſent lodging as mean and incommodious; learn thence to commiſerate the misfortunes of mankind, and to thank providence who has elevated you above a continual ſubjection to them. Reflect how many there are to whoſe dangers your's would appear a trifle, how many more there are to whom proviſion like that which you have taſted would be more delicious than they have ever enjoyed. Weigh the value of your reception here by the neceſſity from which it relieved you. You have never entered a palace with as much joy as you have done my humble

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cell. I ſpeak not this out of a ſilly wiſh to encreaſe your gratitude towards me; I have long given over ſuch idle thoughts; but I wiſh you to learn the ſum of human wiſdom, not to eſtimate external things by the imaginary value which the world affixes to them, but by the real need in which you ſtand of them. Come, ſirs," continued he, "it is time for you to be gone; when I nounced the world I renounced its empty ceremonies. My daughter therefore and her companion muſt be content to be left to themſelves, or by the neglect of my work I ſhall be deprived of neceſſary ſubſiſtence."

"It is a good natured animal enough," ſaid Julia, laughing, to Olivia, as ſoon as the gentlemen had quitted the room, "but horribly rude and given to ſermonizing. I was obliged to bite my tongue until it is bliſtered, leſt I ſhould laugh aloud as he was preaching ſo whimſically. Well,

I wiſh

I wiſh of all things that he may fall in love with me, and you ſhall ſee how I will improve the old gentleman."

"Such a conqueſt, I ſhould imagine, would be hardly worthy of your attention," replied Olivia gravely, "and would certainly be very diſgraceful to him." "No more ſermons, my dear Olivia," ſaid her rattling companion, placing her hand on Olivia's lips, "we have had enough of them in all conſcience for one day; they do not become ſuch a pretty mouth. Why you talk like an old abbeſs already; I believe that your father and mother were married in a convent, lived in a convent, and brought you into the world a nun." She then began to hum a lively air, and calling upon Olivia to follow her, went out to chat with the old hermit.

De Beauvais and la Perriere directed their ſteps to the next village, which

was

was at the diſtance of about a league and an half from the hermit's. They found the people in great confuſion and terror at the depredations of the banditti, who, relying on their numbers, had plundered without fear of reſiſtance, and had committed the moſt wanton barbarities that capricious cruelty could ſuggeſt. No vehicle of any ſort could be procured to convey the ladies to the adjacent town, and if it could, it would have been dangerous to appear in it while the banditti ranged thus through the country. They deemed it therefore ſafer for the ladies to remain for a few days at the hermitage, which, ſituated in the midſt of a thick wood, was ſcarcely viſible at a few yards diſtance from it, and appeared when ſeen, a place where neither curioſity nor avarice could reaſonably expect any reward to ſtimulate a ſearch. They therefore hired a peaſant and his wife to perform ſuch neceſſary and menial ſervices as might be neceſ-

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ſary. They alſo engaged a horſe, and, having laden him with proviſions and ſuch other articles as were requiſite to make their ſtay more comfortable, they returned, under the ſhelter of the night, to the rock. The ladies, whoſe fears and inexperience had made them not a little diſpleaſed with their preſent ſituation, were compelled to yield to neceſſity, and the hermit, although fond of ſolitude, was yet pleaſed with companions, who, from the virtuous enthuſiaſm of their hearts and ſincerity of their conduct, differed eſſentially from that ſelfiſh world he had fled to avoid.

On the next day our adventurers, the hermit, and their ſervant, united their labours to erect a ſmall hut with poſts taken from the wood, to ſerve as a place to dreſs their victuals in, and for the peaſant and his wife to ſleep in. They thatched it with the boughs of trees, and covered theſe over with graſs, which, having

having grown luxuriouſly to an immenſe height in the woods and then withered, was perfectly fitted to the purpoſe. Thus, in a ſhort time, they contrived to render their habitation not uncomfortable, and the ladies learned, with much ſurprize, that there were many things which they had hitherto deemed eſſential to their happineſs that a very little cuſtom taught them not even to miſs the uſe of.

The company were indeed obliged to keep much within doors; the ladies never dared ſtir from the precincts of the rock, for fear of being ſurprized; and the gentlemen, when they ventured into the wood to try to ſnare an hare or a rabbit in a pit-fall, were obliged to go out diſguiſed as wood-cutters.

Thus, for a ſhort ſeaſon, did this amiable family live with all the harmony and ſimplicity of the golden age. They knew no diſtinction of rank, except as far as variety of ſkill urged them to difference of employment. Not merely united by fear and mutual neceſſity, thoſe ſtrong ligaments of ſociety, but full of friendſhip for each other, the common good of all was the object and the happineſs of each.

Alas! how very different is this from the conduct of private families! where proximity of blood ſhould draw the ties of concord and mutual attachment cloſer. Even between connections the moſt intimate, the dæmon of private intereſt has contrived to creep, and ſcatter the ſeeds of diſcord. Even there, hatred, envy, hypocriſy, meanneſs, ſlander, cunning, and every other over-reaching vice have found root, and flouriſh in the

the rank ſoil of ſelfiſhneſs. The ſympathy of kindred ſinks before the love of money. Hence the ſon impiouſly wiſhes for his father's diſſolution, and, greedy of a petty jointure, begrudges life to her, to whom he owes his own exiſtence. Hence the diſcord of brethren is proverbial for its rancour: like greedy wolves they fall upon each other, contending for the paternal ſubſtance as their prey. To the covetous eye of expectation, whatever might by poſſibility be his appears already his right, and he eſteems thoſe whoſe life prevents the accruing of the contingency as uſurpers and enemies.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE tranquility which we have deſcribed our company to have been enjoying, was deſtined to be tranſient. The happineſs of man is

"Brief as the light'ning in the colly'd night
That, in a ſpleen, unfolds both heav'n and earth,
And ere a man hath pow'r to ſay behold!
The jaws of darkneſs do devour it up."

Love, the arbiter of human felicity, who delights, but too often, with cruel ſport,

ſport, to kindle a vain paſſion which is never to be requited, had here exerciſed his empire with the utmoſt rigour.

De Beauvais, being now perpetually in the company of Mademoiſelle de Launay, became every inſtant more enamoured of her; while ſhe, without appearing to undergo any revolution in her affections for him, conſecrated inſenſibly no ſmall portion of regard to the friend of her lover and the ſaviour of her life and honour.

La Perriere was lively in his diſpoſition, and handſome in his perſon. She had ſeen him bravely hazard his life for her deliverance, and that at a time when ſhe was left unprotected by the man who, ſhe fondly imagined, would have deſerted all the world to fly to her ſuccour. Theſe circumſtances frequently recurred to her mind; ſhe was not perfectly

perfectly ſatisfied that de Beauvais had loitered with Mademoiſelle de Clarange by conducting her to the hermitage, while ſhe, who had the firſt claim to his ſervices, was expoſed to the worſt dangers that human imagination can pourtray. She diſcovered, from ſome indirect hints, that de Beauvais and Olivia had been old acquaintances; ſhe ſaw him tenderly ſolicitous for her welfare, and in her eyes read the fond delight with which every little attention of his was received.

As to la Perriere, he was captivated with the perſon, the wit, and the humour of Julia; but reſpect to his friend made him ſmother his growing inclinations. Had that circumſtance been removed, the ſpark, which had ſhot into his boſom, would have ſoon riſen into a flame; but now he revered her as the expected wife of the man he loved,

and

and though he regarded her tenderly, it was as he would have regarded a ſiſter, where love is kept diſtinct and chaſtened from deſire.

The mind of a lover is ever alive to ſuſpicion, until poſſeſſion has put the ſincerity of his miſtreſs's affection beyond a queſtion. De Beauvais ſoon diſcovered that he had forfeited ſome ſhare of Julia's affection. His apprehenſions metamorphoſed her marks of uneaſineſs into tokens of diſaffection. His jealouſy arouſed his pride, and his pride ſought a ſolace in enquiring into the imperfections of his miſtreſs, in reconſidering all her former conduct, and in correcting newly diſcovered errors in his judgment of her character, from the obſervance of which, he ſuppoſed, that the exceſs of his paſſion had hitherto blinded him. He now ſearched in vain for a recollection of any full ſym-

pathy

pathy between their ſouls, nor could he recal the ſoft delicious tumult of paſſion throbbing in her boſom and mantling on her cheek, ſignals of her having experienced thoſe moments when love reigns abſolute, when all is equal tranſport and bliſsful confuſion, and one mutual and warm wiſh ſeems to fill and animate the double heart.

CHAP. XXV.

THERE is a pleaſure in revealing misfortunes to the ſympathiſing eye of a friend which none but the unfortunate can conceive. Our lover ſought for relief by unburthening his griefs to Olivia. Such a confidence was highly diſtreſſing and dangerous to that melancholy beauty. It was in vain that ſhe ſtrove to avoid his company, as inimical to her repoſe; he perceived not her intention, and ſought to be with her perpetually.

His paſſionate declarations of his fondneſs for Julia, his repinings at the loſs

loſs of her affection, ſhewed her how ſuſceptible his ſoul was of the finer feelings of that paſſion. As he ſpoke he would ſometimes take her hand with the freedom of a brother, he would exclaim with deep felt regret, "O that Julia was of a temper ſweet and ſerious as Olivia's!"

She, in his company, his praiſes, and even in his ſorrows, met with additional food for her paſſion. His misfortunes reſembled her own exactly; in the ſimilarity of their fates ſhe found a new ſource of love, and her heart re-echoed for him every tender lamentation that he uttered for Julia. The very cauſe of his deſpair ſerved alſo to encreaſe her uneaſineſs, for a riſing hope would ſometimes ſwell her boſom when ſhe conſidered that Julia no longer loved.

But this hope ſtole on her only to plant a freſh thorn in her virtuous mind. Reflection ſoon told her that de Beauvais and ſhe could never be united. The unfortunate marriage which had been once planned between his uncle and her, the reſentment of that uncle, and the occaſion it would give the world to believe the maligni-ties ſcattered by the Count de Beauvais to her diſcredit, all placed, in her mind, an inſurmountable barrier between her and the man ſhe loved.

Torn with the conflict of contending duties and affections, her conſtitution was unable to bear up againſt ſuch vio-lent aſſaults. Love, pity, and the ſtrug-gles to repreſs her encreaſing paſſion deſtroyed her ſpirits and undermined her delicate frame; the roſes of her cheek fled, the brilliancy of her fine eyes vaniſhed, her lovely face loſt all its ani-mation, but gained, in return, a double

portion

portion of ſweetneſs. She appeared pale and drooping, like the lily whoſe languid head ſinks overladen with the tears of the morning.

Every one remarked this change with ſorrow; nor did it eſcape her own obſervation; but ſhe ſaw, with calm ſatisfaction, the decay of life, and wiſhed for its extinction as the ſole medicine for her afflictions.

No one lamented her illneſs ſo much as de Beauvais. She had ſympathiſed in his grief, ſhe had adminiſtered gentle conſolation to his agitated ſoul, by the attention with which ſhe uſed to liſten to his tranſports and the ſweet wiſdom which flowed eloquently from her lips to calm them. His affection for her gradually encreaſed, and he could find no conſolation except in her ſociety.

The

The ſubtle paſſion of love at length contrived to appear in ſuch a ſhape to the virtuous Olivia, that ſhe could no longer ſcruple to indulge it. Diſguiſed under the appearance of pity for her lover's misfortunes, it inſinuated itſelf into her boſom. Her mind was perpetually occupied in gratifying this inſidious tenderneſs; ſhe wept and ſighed in ſecret, and miſtook the ſorrows ariſing from her own ſituation as compaſſion for his.

De Beauvais, happening to come ſuddenly into her preſence one day, caught her in tears; ſhe endeavoured to hide them at his entrance, and he ſeemed for a moment not to notice them, but, taking her hand, after a ſhort ſilence he ſaid to her, "what, dear Olivia can be the reaſon of this ſudden alteration in your health and your ſpirits? I have made you the confidante of my misfortunes; ſhould any have viſited your heavenly boſom,

boſom, will you not in return honour me by a participation of them? Once you deigned to make me the ſharer of your ſorrows; have I done any thing to forfeit that confidence? Do you no longer eſteem me as your brother? Ah! Olivia! I ſaw the tear ſteal down your cheek as I entered; why is the cauſe of that tear concealed from him who would think it well removed with the hazard of his life."

The heart of Olivia bounded with anxiety as he ſpoke, leſt he ſhould have diſcovered the cauſe of her unhappineſs. Recovering herſelf, however, ſhe thanked him for his kindneſs, but aſſured him that ſhe had no ſorrows to communicate; it was true ſhe perceived her health and ſpirits to be rather worſe than they had been whilſt ſhe was in the convent, but ſhe hoped that they would ſoon return, and ſhe was ſure that the humanity

nity of her companions made them fancy her to be worſe than ſhe really was.

De Beauvais was not ſatisfied with her reply, and frankly ſaid, "I ſee, Olivia, that I have loſt your confidence, and that to the miſeries of diſappointed love I have to add thoſe ariſing from my being deprived of a friendſhip which I valued equally with my love."

The ſincere mind of Olivia knew not how to reply: to declare the real ſituation of her heart was impoſſible; and ſhe was too unſkilled to feign a plauſible ground for her manifeſt diſtreſs. The entrance of Julia afforded her a temporary relief from her embarraſſment.

"What! Olivia," ſhe cried, "always alone with my lover! Have I not reaſon to be jealous, and to preach againſt the inconſtancy of man, or indeed to become a diſciple

a diſciple of the old hermit's?" Then changing her tone, "well child, hold up your head, I am not angry; ye ſhall go together for life, ye will certainly be a ſprightly couple the ſecond month of marriage, ſitting in ſtately ſilence and nodding to each other from different ſides of the fire like the large china mandarines at my grandmama's. Here, de Beauvais, hold out your hand; you have, you know, given it me long ago, ſo that I may diſpoſe of it as I pleaſe; Olivia, give me your's until I join you together for ever." She then took both their hands, and, placing that of Olivia in thoſe of our hero, cried, "now plight eternal vows of ſtupidity and love."

Trivial as this ceremony was, and idle as the diſcourſe which accompanied it, they had a powerful effect on the feelings of Mademoiſelle Clarange in her preſent ſituation. She was afraid to look up, leſt her mind ſhould appear

legible

legible in her countenance, and ſhe would have withdrawn her hand from that of de Beauvais, had ſhe not been afraid that it would provoke ſuſpicion.

"What, girl! wont you thank me for ſuch a preſent?" continued the arch Julia, "I acknowledge he is ſcarcely worth your acceptance, but unfortunately he is the beſt I have to offer you. Come, Olivia, hold up your head; ah, you bluſh! why this confuſion? all your love you know, is dedicated to the church."

The poor Olivia, weak from indiſpoſition, and agitated by the converſation ſhe had juſt held with de Beauvais, was unable to diſſemble further. She conſidered her ſecret as diſcovered, and turning aſide her face to hide her glowing bluſhes, melted into tears.

De Beauvais could no longer doubt the cauſe of her former uneaſineſs, and of her immediate confuſion. Out of delicacy to her he ſeemed not to obſerve her preſent ſituation, and feigning ſome excuſe, left the room to relieve her by his abſence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE giddy Julia, who had not entertained the ſlighteſt notion of effecting the miſchief that her gaiety had thus produced, would gladly have repaired it, but it was now impoſſible. She ſeated herſelf by her friend, who ſtill remained giving ſilent vent to her affliction. "Ah! charming Olivia, can you forgive me for this unfortunate miſtake. Had I entertained the ſlighteſt conjecture of the truth, I ſhould never have ſpoken as I did. I will not accuſe you for not making me the confidante of your paſſion; the peculiarity of our ſituations forbade it: but if you will

now

now repoſe a truſt in my affection, be aſſured I ſhall not prove unworthy of it. I ſee that de Beauvais' attachment to me is no longer what it was; I am not conſcious of deſerving ſlight, and I can readily reſign the lover who ceaſes to behold me with the wonted eyes of ardent affection. You, I know, are not in fault; nor can I blame him for being ſenſible of thoſe charms and that ſweetneſs of diſpoſition which have touched even the heart of a woman. Come, my lovely friend," continued ſhe taking her by the hand, "forget your ſorrows, de Beauvais ſhall be your's; your love, your virtues all deſerve him."

"No," replied the ſighing Olivia, "ſuch an event cannot, muſt not take place; the only circumſtance that could have augmented my misfortunes has now oppreſſed me. It is not merely becauſe he knows that, in violation of maidenly decorum, I have entertained a

paſſion

paſſion for a man profeſſedly the lover of another: his generous nature would pity and forget my error. But oh! ſuch is my fate, he muſt now hate, deſpiſe, and think the wretched Olivia the moſt unworthy of her ſex. I cannot ſee him again; to meet his eye, after what has unfortunately paſſed, would be worſe to me than death. Ah! Julia, if you really pity me, if you feel that friendſhip for me which you profeſs, aſſiſt me to fly this place inſtantly; no matter where I go, or into whoſe hands I fall, let me but avoid him from whom I was in hopes to have buried my fatal ſecret in the grave."

Julia, who, not acquainted with the hiſtory of her afflicted friend, would have diſſuaded her from her reſolution, finding her inexorable, declared her intention to accompany her. Olivia would have diſſuaded her in her turn, but the generous girl refuſed to liſten

to her arguments. "I have been the cauſe," ſaid ſhe, "of your thus travelling without protection, and it is but juſt that I ſhould participate of your danger."

The fair friends, being thus determined, conſulted together concerning the meaſures that they were to take. In the midſt of a large foreſt, ignorant of the ways, and unaccuſtomed to travel, they knew not how they ſhould get to the next town, or avoid the banditti.

In this extremity Olivia, who was ſenſible that the hermit loved her affectionately, and who held him in the higheſt veneration, reſolved to acquaint him with the whole of her ſtory, and to demand his aſſiſtance.

When ſhe had related her hiſtory to him and Julia, not without many bluſhes, the old man, whoſe manners were always gentle to the diſtreſſed, replied

to her, "I ſhould have ill profited, my daughter, by the many bitter leſſons I have received from the world, if I had not long ago perceived that the worm of love was preying upon your too ſenſible heart, and gradually cankering your beauties. I wiſhed to uſe the privilege of a father, and try at once to probe the wound of your mind, and pour in the medicine of comfort, at leaſt to aſſuage its pain, if I could not effect its cure. But you ſeemed laterally to avoid me, and, by a ſtrange fatality, although I often attempted it, I could never get you alone. I had determined on this very evening to deſire you to give me your company for a ſhort time to ſpeak to you on this ſubject, but you have anticipated me by your frankneſs. Your heart, my dear Olivia, was framed with an exceſs of ſweet ſenſibility; alas! in this life it is oftener the ſource of ſorrow than of joy. Providence added to that ſenſibility a noble mind and a re-

ſolute

ſolute ſenſe of virtue to reſtrain and govern it, and if you were born, my child, to endure the miſery of ſtruggling with the violence of paſſion, you were born to the glory of ſucceſs in the contention: ſuch, in this probationary ſtate, is the life of the virtuous! what is it more than a bitter and continual warfare with our frail inclinations? In your conduct there has nothing appeared as a ſubject of blame, but much of praiſe; thoſe who would cenſure you for an involuntary paſſion know nothing of human nature: could they know your efforts to ſuppreſs it, they ought to look on you with admiration. I approve of your reſolution to fly immediately from this place, and certainly," caſting a piercing look at Julia, "it will not be imprudent in your friend to accompany you. I will myſelf be your conductor to a cottage about two leagues diſtant, where I will procure a guide for you to the next town. As you cannot obtain diſguiſes here, ſimplify

ſimplify your preſent dreſſes as much as poſſible; we cannot ſet out until the evening, and ſhould the gentlemen come to our cottage in the mean time, you need not appear."

This conſolatory diſcourſe of the good old man's calmed the diſtreſſed mind of Olivia in ſome degree, and ſhe and Julia retired to the inner apartment to alter their dreſs purſuant to his directions.

CHAP. XXVII.

WHILE theſe things were taking place in the cottage, de Beauvais had wandered through the wood abſorbed in thought. He ſaw that he was beloved by Olivia, and that the indiſcretion of Julia did not permit him any longer to appear ignorant of it. "How perverſe" cried he, "is the human heart! In beauty, in accompliſhments and perfections of mind, I muſt acknowledge that Julia is inferior to that lovely maid; I am ſenſible that ſhe loves me, and that Mademoiſelle de Launay no longer regards me; yet my ungrateful heart ſtill adores her

her who avoids me, and ſlights her who would requite my paſſion."

He now revolved in his mind a number of little circumſtances which had paſſed between her and him; and this knowledge of her affection for him ſet them all in a new and more amiable light, and made her ſhine to greater advantage in his opinion, "ſhe is generous and noble to exceſs," ſaid he, "or elſe ſhe would not have aſſiſted her rival to gain the man who was not indifferent to her. How often has ſhe ſympathiſed with me for the levity of the verſatile Julia, and forgotten that which her own peace required, to wiſh for me what ſeemed neceſſary to mine! Ah! Olivia! why is my heart thus inſenſible, ſurely ſomething more tender than pity muſt thus intereſt me in your happineſs."

From that moment Olivia became leſs indifferent to de Beauvais than ſhe had ever

ever been. Gratitude for her love thus beſtowed on him, pity for her ſituation, and pique at the coldneſs of Julia, the ſenſe of which was not a little encreaſed by the different conduct of her companion, all ſerved to fix this ſpark in his boſom: nor did it appear to himſelf to poſſeſs the ſtrength it really had gained, owing to that habitual empire which Julia had gained over his heart.

Our hero, who was well acquainted with the delicacy of Mademoiſelle de Clarange, knew not how to appear before her again. He thought, however, that the method which would be leaſt likely to alarm her ſenſibility, would be to ſeem not to have underſtood the meaning of her confuſion at the time when it betrayed the ſecret of her heart; that, for this purpoſe, it would be right to behave to her as uſual before company, and to avoid all opportunities

nities of meeting her alone, until the removal of the banditti ſhould give him the means of placing her and Julia in ſome place of ſafety, where they might ſee him or exclude him from their company, at their own choice.

Having concluded thus in his own mind, he returned, although not deſtitute of ſome uneaſy feelings, towards the cottage. He met la Perriere as he approached it, and they were joined by the old hermit at the door.

The hermit told them that they muſt learn to bear the abſence of the ladies for that day, as they felt themſelves indiſpoſed for ſociety.

De Beauvais, who attributed their non-appearance to the morning's accident, felt not very uneaſy at this novel circumſtance, for which he was able to

divine

divine the cauſe. But it had a very different effect upon la Perriere; he could not conceal his anxiety, and the hermit was obliged to aſſure him repeatedly that there was no reaſon for being alarmed on the ladies' account.

The expreſſion of his uneaſineſs was too marked to eſcape the notice of his friend, in whoſe mind the ſuſpicion aroſe that he loved Mademoiſelle de Launay; nor did his conjectures ſtop there, he ſuppoſed him to be a favoured rival, and that he owed to his underhand machinations the loſs of Julia's heart. Such an appearance of a breach of friendſhip ſtung his mind as bitterly as the coldneſs of his miſtreſs, and he reſolved to demand an explanation from the man whom he deemed he had falſely called his friend.

Naturally

Naturally of a fiery temper, our hero could but ill conceal his emotions; la Perriere, however, was too much buried in thought to obſerve it, and as for the hermit he attributed it to a lover's anxiety.

The evening now began to put on her ſober mantle of grey, when la Perriere begged of his friend to accompany him in a little excurſion through the wood; the other gladly ſeized the opportunity, which he was himſelf about to demand, and they left the houſe together.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE hermit, who had waited on the brow of the rock to see what path the gentlemen would take, went, as soon as he had perceived it, to give the ladies notice of their departure.

"Come, my daughters," said he, "let us hasten our journey, your friends seem as if they wish to favour your escape from them, for they have taken the road directly contrary to that which we are to travel; come, I am glad to see you so speedily equipped; to minds so willing as yours such a journey will be nothing.

nothing. Yet what anxiety, what ſorrow will be here, when they find you gone."

Olivia and Julia both ſighed at this; the hermit's eye was on the former; perceiving it, ſhe gave him her hand at the inſtant, in a manner which expreſſed as much as if ſhe had ſaid to him, doubt not my reſolution.

"Come, my children," continued he, taking Julia with his other hand, "thoſe who would be permanently happy, muſt be content to ſacrifice their preſent eaſe to the proſpect of a greater and more diſtant felicity; you quit thoſe now whom you eſteem, you undergo the fatigues of journeying, and expoſe yourſelves to the perils of the night for an honourable purpoſe; the love of virtue inſpires you with reſolution; the ſatisfaction of having done right is in itſelf a recompence for the ſacrifices we

 make

make to it; nor is this its only reward, it is the moſt probable mode of attaining peace in this life, and the certain one of earning the felicity of the next."

This venerable man, who found it impoſſible to conceal his truly humane diſpoſition under the guiſe of a rude manner, having thus endeavoured to inſpire his fair gueſts with additional reſolution to perform their intended journey, led them down the rock.

As they deſcended, both of his companions turned to take a parting look at the cottage. Their eyes met as they were withdrawing them from viewing it for the laſt time, and their mutual bluſhes proclaimed the ſimilarity of their thoughts.

They took the path through the wood directly contrary to that which our two adventurers had taken, and were obliged

ged to proceed cautiously and without noise, dreading to be surprized by the scouts of the robbers, who might be roving about the country. Being often obliged to go round about to avoid the frequented paths, and the way through the wood being extremely rough and obstructed with briars and branches, they advanced very slowly, and not without enduring much fatigue. To add to their distresses, the clouds began to gather thick, and soon wrapt them in darkness. The wind whistled through the rustling trees; the howling of the wolves, the shrieks of the screech owl, and the combined yells of the several animals of the forest, struck the hearts of the ladies with terror, and alarmed even the steady mind of the sage and experienced hermit; all nature seemed in motion, and every thing animate and inanimate appeared to dread the conflict of the elements in the approaching tempest.

The

The rain now deſcends with the rapidity of a torrent; the roaring winds pour forth impetuous guſts which make the foreſt tremble; and every now and then ſome ancient tree is heard to craſh beneath their violence; the lived lightnings dart along the ſky; this moment the heavens ſeem one ſulphureous ſheet of fire, and diſplay the deſtructive violence of the tempeſt in the ruin it has ſpread around; the next all is thick and terrifying darkneſs, while the heavy thunder rolling over their heads ſhakes their appalled ſouls, and ſeems to threaten them with inviſible and certain deſtruction.

Our travellers being now wet to the ſkin, and the ground being quite plaſhy and obſtructed with the roots and boughs of trees, they could ſcarcely keep their feet. To complete their misfortune the hermit loſt the path, and they neither knew

knew where they were, nor whither they were going."

The ſtrength and reſolution of Julia, whoſe ſpirits were only calculated for the ſmooth and eaſy paths of life, began to fail her in this complication of horrors and diſtreſs, and ſhe declared to her companions, that ſhe could go no further but muſt lie down and die. The hermit and Olivia endeavoured to comfort her, and perſuade her to proceed. She had not time to reply when the forky lightening flaſhed an inſtantaneous blaze almoſt before their feet. Julia gave a ſhriek and fell. "Oh! ſhe is dead," exclaimed the afflicted Olivia, "my friend, who undertook this journey on my account, has fallen a victim to my gratification," and ſhe kneeled to attempt to raiſe her. "Heaven forbid it," ſaid the hermit. "Almighty Father, if it be thy will," cried the good old man, raiſing up his hands and eyes to the heavenly

heavenly throne, " pity and comfort theſe poor innocents."

Scarcely had he concluded this petition, when a voice thundered out through the wood " who goes there?" The hermit returned no anſwer; in an inſtant a gun was fired, and this good patron of virtue fell wounded to the ground; " Heaven have mercy on me," he whiſpered Olivia, " and protect you my dear daughter; we are fallen among villains; the words we heard were the challenge of their centinels; we are now in the worſt of hands; the furies of the ſky and earth and the villainies of men conſpire to deſtroy us. Still, however, God is all ſufficient: let us ſuffer without repining." Here his voice failed him.

The ſituation of poor Olivia was now moſt dreadful. The ſtorm continued to howl, and the rain to deſcend as vehemently as ever; ſhe was in the midſt

midſt of a foreſt, one of her companions to all appearance dead, and the other dying, while the certain preſence of ſome unknown enemy ſerved to complete the horrors which ſurrounded her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

EVEN in this dreadful ſituation Olivia loſt not entirely the command of her mind: ſhe thought it better to truſt even to the humanity of robbers, to obtain ſuccour for her companions and the preſervation of her own life, than to remain expoſed as ſhe was to all the inclement rage of the tempeſt, unable to aſſiſt her friends. She therefore called aloud, and begged that if there was any one within hearing he would come to her relief.

In a few minutes two fellows, dreſſed like ſoldiers, came toward her with lanthorns,

lanthorns. When they had come up to her and ſeen her thus ſurrounded by the dead, one of them clapped his lanthorn near her face, and when they perceived her beauty, which even ſuch a ſituation could not deface, inſtead of pitying her misfortunes, they began to felicitate themſelves on the prize they had thus unexpectedly fallen in with.

Olivia trembled as ſhe heard their converſation, and regretted that ſhe had not met with two of the moſt ſavage beaſts in the foreſt, inſtead of two of her own ſpecies.

They ordered her rudely to riſe and follow them, adding, with an oath and a laugh, that ſhe ſeemed fitter company for the living than the dead.

She conjured them to carry her poor ſenſeleſs companions to ſome place of ſhelter; but they told her, ſcoffingly,

that they were no undertakers, and that however it might be their business to kill people, it was none of theirs to meddle with them when dead.

The distressed Olivia again supplicated them, for the sake of mercy and of humanity, to assist her dying friends; but in vain: the souls of these miscreants had been long dead to the yearnings of compassion. Seeing her unwilling to leave her companions, they were proceeding to force her away; but she flung herself on the bodies, and, grasping them fast, refused to be separated from them.

"Well," cried one of them to the other, "we may as well humour the woman, take you one dead bundle, I shall trundle the other on my shoulders, we have not far to take them, and the devil's in it if we don't contrive to make her

her reward us by and by for our trouble."

They took up their burthens accordingly, and, followed by Olivia, who was so much afflicted with the fate of her companions as scarcely to reflect upon her own greater danger, arrived at a cavern hollowed in the side of a rock, where two other fellows were sitting by a large fire. They laid Julia and the hermit down in a corner near it, and sat down to jest with each other concerning their luggage and the reward they expected. The hapless Olivia, intent alone upon attempting to recover her companions, heeded them not.

Julia had only sunk into a fit, frightened with the sudden approach of the lightening and exhausted with fatigue. Assisted, therefore, by the gentle heat, which now rekindled the latent spark of

life,

life, ſhe began gradually to recover. She continued, however, very ill.

Our heroine forgot not alſo to attend to the hermit; he was wounded in the leg, and had fainted through the loſs of blood. She cut off a lock of her long gloſſy hair to aſſiſt in ſtopping the blood, and bound up the wound with her veil.

But while the gentle Olivia forgot thus her fatigues, her dangers, and the perils hanging immediately over her, in ſtriving to remedy the woes of others, ah! what power ſeemed anxious to mitigate her's, or even to prevent their further accumulation! The robbers had now finiſhed their ſupper, and, being heated with drinking, began a diſcourſe concerning her which ſoon drowned every other care and ſorrow in one infinitely greater. What can paint the horrors of her chaſte and delicate mind, when ſhe heard

heard them conclude upon the violation of her perſon! She trembled, grew ſick, and was near fainting; falling on her knees, however, ſhe invoked the arm of heaven to reſcue her from ſuch miſery, if not with life, with immediate death; "grant me at leaſt, thou power that watcheſt over innocence, that I may preſerve the faculties of my mind and body on this trying occaſion, and I will myſelf execute what muſt be thy will for the preſervation of my honour."

Juſt as ſhe had concluded this mental invocation, the villains approached towards her in a body, addreſſing her with rude licentiouſneſs; but the lovely maid, her diſhevelled hair having eſcaped its band and flowing over her ſhoulders in looſe diſorder, with ſtreaming eyes and ſupplicating hands, fell on her knees and invoked their pity. "As ye yourſelves have had mothers, gentlemen, have mercy on me, and think what they would have

have ſuffered in my ſituation; as ye would yourſelves hope for pity in your moſt trying urgent neceſſity on earth or in heaven, pity me in mine. Spare, O ſpare," continued the ſobbing victim, "a poor creature helpleſs and unprotected, who was caſt into your company by diſtreſs, and who never could have conceived a thought to your injury." Hardened in villainy, theſe monſters were not to be moved with the ſight of ſo much beauty in diſtreſs, or with her piteous entreaties. One of them dared ſacrilegiously to force his hand upon her boſom, another ſeized her by the arm: but ſhe ſpringing from them with amazing violence, flew into a corner and cried, "ſtay, unfeeling wretches, whom nothing can bend from wickedneſs, dread the thunder rolling over your head, and tremble leſt the Almighty vengeance deſcend immediately in puniſhment of the act you force me to."

Even

Even theſe villains ſtood awed at her manner, which appeared full of ſublime animation; they trembled with amazement, leſt that deſtruction to which ſhe had devoted them ſhould fall immediately on their heads, and they looked as if expecting the fire of heaven to conſume them at her command.

She, in the mean time, confident in her innocence, ſtood prepared to plunge a weapon, which ſhe had ſecured for the purpoſe, into her boſom, if they ſhould approach too near her. But Heaven, who ſeldom abandons innocence even in this world, interfered for her preſervation.

"Stay, brothers," cried one of the villains, "we may let the girl alone, until we ſettle atleaſt the order of our gratification." They entered on their diabolical council, and began immediately to

put

put in their various claims with equal heat and obſtinacy; one urged that he found her, another that he was commander, and a third ſome important ſervice by which he had formerly preſerved the lives of his companions.

Heated with wine, none of them would yield, and they proceeded to decide the conteſt with their daggers. The poor Olivia ſtood in the mean time in the corner, reſolved that the approach of any of them too near to her ſhould be the ſignal of her death, but determined not to ſacrifice her life raſhly by her own hand until providence ſhould ſeem to call for the act by making it impoſſible for her to live any longer with honour.

The combat was obſtinate and bloody, and they fought all through each other without ſingling out any particular object for their fury. The fel-

low,

low, however, who had propoſed the difficulty which had thus raiſed their weapons againſt each other, kept entirely aloof, and watching his opportunity contrived to wound thoſe who appeared the moſt ſtrong, and likely to come off victorious. At length two of them were killed, and a third was ſo tired and ſpent with fatigue and loſs of blood that he yielded an eaſy victory to his treacherous companion, and his fierce ſpirit fled to join thoſe of his miſerable aſſociates.

Such is the end of friendſhips founded on iniquity! The gratification of lawleſs paſſions is the original cement of them, and for that gratification they will at any time be diſſolved. Theſe wretches had lived long in the appearance and habits of amity; but the ſight of a fair and ſtrange face was ſufficient to diſſolve, in an inſtant, an union founded in mutual

assistance, and an equal participation in all the dangers and pleasures which attended their manner of life.

Olivia was not as yet rescued from fear; she was, however, soon delighted to see the survivor lay down his weapon and entreat her to calm her apprehensions.

"It was out of compassion to you that I sowed this dissention among my companions; I foresaw the event of it, and knew that your safety could alone be effected by it."

The grateful fair one lifted up her eyes to heaven, full of heartfelt thanksgiving for her deliverance. She thanked him who had thus preserved her, but resolved not to trust entirely to his protestations. This fellow, whose bosom humanity seemed not to have quite relinquished,

relinquiſhed, now aſſiſted her in taking care of her friends; they placed them near the fire, and, by the aſſiſtance of a little warm wine, brought them ſomewhat to themſelves.

Julia, who had only recovered out of one fainting fit to relapſe into another, was not ſenſible of any thing that had paſſed ſince ſhe had firſt fainted in the foreſt; on the reſtoration of her underſtanding now, ſhe wondered where ſhe was, and, had not the robber been careful to remove the dead bodies from the cave, ſhe was ſo weak that ſhe muſt have again relapſed with terror.

The hermit had a confuſed notion of what had paſſed in the cavern, and being now ſufficiently recovered to hear the relation of Olivia's dangers and deliverance, wrung her hand affectionately, ſaying to her, deſpair not my

daughter,

daughter, one so humane and virtuous cannot be deserted by providence.

The preserver of Olivia made her take some refreshment herself, and then shewed her a small closet in the cave, separated from the outer part of it by a door. In this closet there was a bed, to which he pressed her to retire with Julia for the night, and leave the hermit to his care.

Having examined the door on the inside, which was well secured with bolts, and being greatly fatigued, she consented. She led Julia along with her, and both of their cloaths being now dried, they did not take them off, but reclining themselves on the coarse pallet, endeavoured to find relief from their fatigue and indisposition in sleep.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

OUR fair wanderers paſſed but a diſagreeable night. Their delicate conſtitutions, not inured to toil, were much harraſſed with the fatigue and terrors they had ſuffered. They were both too feveriſh to ſleep much, and the ſhort ſlumbers that ſometimes viſited them, were accompanied with frightful dreams, ſcarcely leſs horrid than the realities they had eſcaped.

Olivia, however, determined to riſe early in the morning, and ſee what ſcheme was to be purſued to enable her

and

and her companion to leave the frightful and dangerous place in which they at present were. Although Julia continued very ill, she flattered herself that she would be able to travel; but it grieved her to think that she could devise no scheme which could bring the wounded hermit along with her, so that his sickness might meet with every possible alleviation from her care.

Full of anxiety, she unbolted the door of her room and went to consult the hermit. This good old man advised her and Julia to fly, if possible immediately, from this place. "I have been talking to this fellow," continued he, "and endeavouring to sound his intentions with respect to you, but I have not been able to discover them perfectly; he has told me that the robbers whom we saw here were not the whole of the troop to which he belongs; that the

rest

reſt are in number thirteen, who are gone to make depredations on the other ſide the river, and that he expects them to return very ſoon. He adds, that there are no leſs than three conſiderable gangs of robbers in the province of Franche Compté, conſiſting of a number of diſſolute fellows, who, hoping protection in the confuſion of the times, prefer ſnatching a precarious ſubſiſtence from rapine to earning one more ſcanty but more permanent from labour. Of the diſpoſitions of theſe fellows you are ignorant, or rather you may ſuppoſe them like thoſe of their deceaſed companions; you have every thing to dread therefore from their return, and it behoves you to be ſpeedy in the adoption of your meaſures. The fellow is now gone out to fetch water from the neighbouring ſpring; on his return preſs him to let you depart, and to conduct you and Julia to the direct road leading

to

to the next village. Grieve not my affectionate daughter," continued he, gently preſſing her hand, " at being thus obliged to leave me. My chief ſolicitude is about your welfare; the greateſt happineſs that I can taſte will be the tidings of your ſafety; go, my dear child," purſued he, " go to preſerve yourſelf and your companion, and if the prayers of an old and not a wicked man have any weight to call down bleſſings from heaven, you will be happy."

Olivia was very much moved at this affectionate diſcourſe; ſhe ſaw, however, the neceſſity there was for following his advice implicitly, and when the thief returned, after thanking him for his humanity to her and her companions, ſhe beſought him to point out to her and her recovered friend the road to the next village.

This

This diſcourſe diſcontented the robber very much. It was not out of mere humanity that he had on the preceding night delivered her from immediate deſtruction. His ruling paſſion was avarice not love, and he conjectured from the air and manner of Olivia that ſhe could afford a conſiderable ſum for her ranſom. It was this reaſon that principally impelled him, although mingled with ſome degree of compaſſion for her ſituation, to prefer her deliverance to the lives of his aſſociates.

When he had done ſo much to gain the prize, he was not likely to permit it to ſlip through his graſp; he began therefore, purpoſely, to raiſe her fears by dark and ambiguous anſwers. This had the deſired effect upon Olivia, who promiſed to enrich him more amply out of her eſtate than he could ever hope by his preſent ſituation. Such ſplendid offers prevailed; but the fortune of our

travellers

travellers could not be controuled, and the remainder of the robbers entered the cave before Olivia and her companion had quitted it.

The name of the captain was Virieux; his manners were extremely ferocious; he was brave, vigilant, enterprizing, and liberal, but cruel; in short, perfectly adapted to the poſt he held. As he entered the cavern, he beheld with a ſavage joy the profuſe treaſure of beauty which fate had thus put into his power; and, with the true feelings of a barbarian gloated on thoſe expreſſions of terror which his fair trembling captives manifeſted.

He was principally ſmitten with the beauties of Olivia; for the conſtitution of Julia had ſunk under the diſtreſſes of her ſituation. He went up to ſalute her with all the inſolent familiarity of one who

who knew that he could force what he condescended to sue for.

The poor Olivia trembled, as a dove would in the pounces of an hawk, but she repulsed his freedom with a dignified steadiness. Equally inflamed with the charms and vexed at the stately coldness of Olivia, Virieux cried out in a passion, "take care, girl, don't provoke me to humble your pride; if you do, this night I shall see you kneeling in tears at my feet; I will shew an haughty fool what it is to insult without power, and that Virieux will not deign to supplicate for a pleasure which he may command."

Colombe (which was the name of the fellow who had formerly preserved Olivia,) felt very uneasy at this conversation; his avarice had been raised by the promises of Olivia, and he wished to favour her; but he knew the temper of

his

his captain too well to conceive it poſſible, if his paſſion ſhould be completely aroufed; he wiſhed, therefore, to protract matters until he could deviſe ſome means of liberating the captives. With this view he brought Virieux out from the cave, and informed him that Olivia was very rich, as ſhe had indeed told Colombe. He dwelt upon her charms, and pointed out to his captain how much every gratification would be heightened if the love and tranſport were mutual, and that the only way to obtain her conſent to his attaining that happineſs which he muſt otherwiſe ſnatch imperfectly by violence, was to propoſe marriage; that ſhe, in her ſituation, would gladly embrace ſuch means to ſave her honour, and that he would gain a title to an immenſe eſtate. He alarmed him alſo with the idea, that if the captive ſhould prove as reſolutely virtuous as her firmneſs of demeanour made it probable ſhe was, nothing

would

would be in his power without her consent, since her life was always in her own power.

Virieux, now grown cool, liked this advice. Thus lessoned he returned to the despairing Olivia, and after forcing his rugged soul to discompose itself with some apologies for his rudeness, and mingling some professions of love, he concluded with mentioning that he expected her consent to marry him on the ensuing day.

Such an unexpected proposal served additionally to disconcert his afflicted captive. She was totally unprepared for it, and was obliged to pause some time for an answer: not that she deliberated whether she should reject his proferred hand; on that head she could have no cause for hesitation; but she wished to consider what address from her would be most likely to indicate her unalterable

unalterable reſolution, and at the ſame time give the leaſt offence to his pride.

At length ſhe replied to him, bluſhing, and holding down her head, betraying a ſweet confuſion, yet without loſing the command of her underſtanding, "Perhaps, ſir, the expected and natural anſwer to your propoſal, from a a perſon in my unfortunate ſituation, ſhould be a grateful acceptance of it. As far as the offer you have made me is intended to honour me, I am ſenſible of the obligation; but, ſir, I ſtill muſt ſay that no conſideration can induce me to marry. Start not, ſir, but hear my reaſons; I am one of thoſe whom the lacking of a convent drove from that peaceful aſylum, I had determined to dedicate my life there to religious retirement, I had entered upon my noviciate, and eſteem myſelf as already betrothed to a ſpouſe, with reſpect to whom the whole world is vile; thus ſituated, ſir, I cannot

marry

marry with the approbation of my conſcience, and without its approbation I never will conſent to any thing. I have been told, ſir, that riches are the principal object of gentlemen in your way of life; my friends are rich, and I know that you need only to name the price of my ranſom to obtain it. Conſider what I have ſaid, ſir, and permit me to go my way, and ſerve my God in peace, and may that God crown you with proſperity and honour in requital."

Virieux, who had not liſtened to this ſpeech with the utmoſt patience, replied, "come, come child; theſe fine ſpeeches will not have the leaſt effect; one ſo beautiful as you, was never intended for a nunnery. In a ſhort time you will thank me for reſcuing you from ſuch a uſeleſs, unnatural ſtate; with the certainty that this time will ſoon arrive, I ſhall perſiſt in my reſolution,

and

and I am ſure that it would chagrin you, were I to accept of a king's ranſom in your ſtead."

"If I could expect," replied Olivia with ſpirit, "that one who has talked ſo irreverently of religion could pay any attention to the claims of juſtice, I would aſk you, what right have you to detain me here, or conſtrain my inclinations to any thing? I have been made your priſoner, without the leaſt pretext of reaſon. I met with your men, by accident; I applied to them for ſuccour, when in the utmoſt diſtreſs: alas! I then thought it the utmoſt diſtreſs, but ſubſequent miſeries have taught me to envy even that ſituation as happy. In requital of my application to their humanity they wounded a perſon deſervedly dear to me, endangered my own life, and now, to complete the cruelty, you would force me to become

become your wife in defiance of the laws of my conſcience, and the dictates my heart."

The countenance of Virieux kindled as ſhe ſpoke. Going up to her, he took her hand by force, ſaying "hark ye my young nun, I have not time to debate the matter with you; of this be aſſured, and reflect on it maturely, you ſhall either become my wife, or become mine on eaſier terms; chuſe whether you will command or ſerve here." He then turned on his heel, and went to give orders for fixing tents, while the poor Olivia retired, bathed in tears, to the hermit, who had remained in the other cell.

CHAP. XXXI.

HAVING left our heroines in a ſituation, from which we are afraid they will not find it eaſy to eſcape; we hope that our readers will have no objection to accompany us back again to our heroes, whom they may recollect we left in the woods at the requeſt of la Ferriere, and with the wiſh of de Beauvais.

They walked for ſome time together, obſerving a profound ſilence. The ſuſpicions of de Beauvais began already to ſubſide; his paſſion melted away, and he became now afraid to hurt his friend with

with ſuggeſtions which he deemed to be groundleſs. The mind of la Perriere, on the contrary, ſeemed gradually to become more agitated; he appeared ſeveral times to ſtruggle for ſpeech, and to recal the words juſt as they were about to iſſue from his lips.

At length, looking anxiouſly at his friend, he broke ſilence. "You behold before you, chevalier, one who has violated that friendſhip which he profeſſed to you, yet I call heaven to witneſs that my fault has not been intentional: my heart has not been able to reſiſt the impreſſive charms of Mademoiſelle de Launay; I had flattered myſelf that I admired her only as your intended wife, but I find, from the vehemence of my involuntary agitations, that I am more warmly attached to her than it becomes me to be to the miſtreſs of my friend. I cannot, chevalier, either juſtify this to my own heart or to you; but let the

bitterneſs

bitterneſs of this confeſſion and the ſacrifice I am going to make expiate my involuntary crime; to-morrow I ſhall fly you and Julia for ever. May you be ever happy my friend," continued he, graſping his hand fervently, "I go to hide my unfortunate paſſion afar off: think ſometimes on him who is forced to fly from you, to preſerve his integrity uncontaminated and his friendſhip undiminiſhed."

De Beauvais knew not how to reply to this confeſſion of la Perriere's; he could not reſent his unfortunate paſſion, ſince every thing which depended on his own virtue he ſeemed reſolute to execute in order to ſubdue it. Our hero was attached to his friend; but the tie of friendſhip when compared to that of love is feeble as the ſpider's web to the ſinew of the lion. He, therefore, not only did not diſapprove of, but even wiſhed his departure.

"Your

"Your conduct, my dear friend," replied he, "is worthy the integrity of your heart: I love Julia to adoration, but candour compels me to add that I fear I have loſt her affections; ſuch is the undiſguiſed ſtate of things: conſult your own boſom, and follow its dictates; I know it too well to fear that it will miſlead you, and, whatever be the reſult," added he embracing him, "la Perriere ſhall ever be equally dear to his friend."

Such a kind reception of his confeſſion determined the citizen more firmly than ever in his reſolution; and the friends, after having rambled through the wood until it was quite dark, returned to the hermitage.

But how great was their aſtoniſhment and grief to find it deſerted! As they knew that the ladies had never quitted the rock before, they were infinitely alarmed. They flew to the peaſant's wife

wife and enquired of them from her; but ſhe could give them no other intelligence than that they were gone out in company with the hermit.

They ſate, for ſome time, impatiently, expecting their return, until the ſtorm began to rage wildly againſt the rock on which their cottage was built. As they heard it they looked at each other with countenances full of deſpair, afraid to declare to each other their thoughts. At length they reſolved to go out in ſearch of their loſt companions in the midſt of the tempeſt.

They walked a conſiderable way into the wood, and ſhouted aloud; but the bellowing of the ſtorm drowned their voices, and, after a long and laborious attempt, they were forced to return, full of deſpair.

They

They employed themſelves during the remainder of the night in lamenting bitterly the abſence of their fair friends, and conjecturing what could have befallen them. Sometimes they flattered themſelves that they had gone to walk in company with the hermit, and, going too far, had fled from the fury of the tempeſt to the ſhelter of ſome neighbouring cottage. At other times, they terrified themſelves with the ſuppoſition that they might have become a prey to the wolves, or fallen victims to the fury of the heavens. They even ſometimes dreaded that they might have been ſurpriſed in their excurſion by ſome of the banditti, and carried to their camp. This ſuppoſition ſeemed ſcarce leſs terrible than the former: they reſolved, however, to explore the foreſt with the firſt dawn of light, to diſcover, if poſſible, the fate of their lovely friends.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

THEY began to traverſe the wood, with minds full of anxiety. As they paſſed cloſe by a road which led through it, they were ſurprized with the noiſe of piſtols: they haſtened towards the ſpot, and perceived an old man and his ſervant rendering faint quittance to the attacks of three ruffians under whoſe violence they were juſt ſinking. "It is my uncle!" exclaimed de Beauvais, drawing his ſword, and throwing himſelf before him to preſerve him from the aſſaults of the villains; la Perriere ſeconded his friend with vigour; and their ſuccour was equally powerful and timely;

timely; two of the aſſailants yielded their lives to the ſwords of our friends, while the third fled and eſcaped.

The chevalier then congratulated the count on his deliverance, with all that ſatisfaction which a good mind feels in having reſcued any one from miſery: his exultation was indeed greater, becauſe he ſincerely loved the perſon to whom he had owed, ſo many years, protection, and regarded his ſubſequent animoſity to him as the effect of deluſion.

When taken by ſurprize, the genuine goodneſs of our nature will controul the worſt habit of mind which we have unhappily cheriſhed in our boſom to our deſtruction or diſgrace. Gratitude for his recent deliverance kindled a ſpark of affection in the heart of the count for his nephew, and if he did

not return, he at leaſt ſuffered the careſſes and liſtened to the declarations of that amiable young man. His paſſion for Olivia had long ſince ſubſided, and his reſentment againſt our hero was conſequently leſs violent. Time, if it trace the wrinkles of care on the human face, often fills up the furrows which ſorrow has indented on the heart: and if it haſten the decay of nature, it is the gentle lenient of violent affliction. Much of the count de Beauvais' anger had yielded to the imperceptible ſway of time, when our hero was thus fortunate enough to reſcue him from deſtruction, which would have been otherwiſe inevitable.

La Perriere ſaw the conflict of nature and pride in his countenance; he ſaw his eyes kindle and grow ſullenly cool by turns, and beheld him at one moment ready to claſp his nephew warmly

to his heart, and at the next to reject his courteſies with diſdain. "This," cried he, "is the time to ſtep in between the man and his vices, and to incline the balance to the ſide of forgiveneſs and affection."

The count had been wounded with a ball in the groin, which, although it did not pain him much while he was warm, bled a good deal: la Perriere begged to look at the wound, that, as he had ſome ſkill in ſurgery, he might bind it up.

Having examined it, he ſaid, as if with ſome reluctance, "ſir, you ſeem a man of fortitude, and muſt know that it is better to hear that heavy truth which may prepare you for eternal peace, than to ſleep in this world ignorant of your danger, and awaken in the next to unhappineſs. You will, I truſt, recover of this wound, but it is fit you ſhould

prepare

prepare againſt the worſt, and make your peace with God and man."

"Sir," replied the count, after ſome heſitation, "I thank you for your ſalutary counſel; that which is the fate of a man I truſt I ſhall be able to meet with the fortitude of a man." His nephew, who did not comprehend the deſign of his friend, caſt a reproachful look at him for what he conceived to be a cruel zeal, and, penetrated with affliction, beſought the wounded nobleman that he would pronounce his forgiveneſs, aſſuring him that he had never intentionally injured him.

A death bed is a wonderful ſoftener of human reſentment: we cannot ourſelves hope for mercy from him before whom we muſt all appear if we render none; and we become at leaſt politically good in the hopes of an ample retribution.

retribution. Overcome with all the circumstances of his present situation, the old count felt his resentment melt into forgiveness, and he pronounced his reconciliation with his nephew, who had kneeled to receive it.

La Perriere had dressed the count's wound as well as his situation would permit; but our party had not much time to felicitate themselves on their mutual amity, or to devise means for carrying the wounded man to a place of safety, when they were surrounded by the banditti, who, alarmed by the report of their companion who had fled from the fury of de Beauvais and his friend, had come out in a large body to take vengeance for their slaughtered associates.

Resistance to such a number would have been useless, and was in the pre-

sent

ſent inſtance impoſſible, ſince the robbers had ſtolen ſo ſilently on them as to ſurprize our friends ſitting on the ground, too much occupied with their thoughts on what had paſſed to pay much attention to what was going on around them. They were bound, and carried immediately to the tent of Virieux.

He knew the count de Beauvais, and reſolved to ſpare him in hopes of receiving a large ranſom, but he alſo reſolved that one of the others ſhould expiate by death the injury he had ſuſtained in the loſs of his ſoldiers. He ſternly ordered them to draw lots to determine whoſe the melancholy fate ſhould be. The unfortunate friends were obliged to ſubmit; and the fatal ſentence fell upon the chevalier de Beauvais.

CHAP. XXXIII.

OLIVIA and Julia had, as we have formerly related, retired full of deſpair to the hermit, who endeavoured to comfort them. "Alas! my father," ſaid the afflicted Olivia, her modeſt eyes ſuffuſed with tears, "where am I now to look for comfort? where can I look for deliverance from this infamous perſecution, except in death?" Here ſhe wept with a greater degree of paſſion, than ſhe had ever manifeſted before.

"Talk not thus, my dear child," replied the hermit; "to abandon yourſelf thus

thus to deſpair is criminal, it is to doubt the protection of Heaven. Were there no other alternative but whether you ſhould loſe your honour or your life, I would not blame the weakneſs which ſhould prefer the loſs of the former, but I would envy the heroiſm which ſhould determine on relinquiſhing the latter. The one is not a crime, but the other is the greateſt effort of a glorious mind. To die for the inculcation of an uſeful moral truth, is to become a real martyr for the common good; and Cato and Lucretia, who by great examples rivetted the love of patriotiſm and chaſtity more firmly in the human heart than a million of ſpeculative arguments, deſerve better of the world than thouſands who have been conſecrated ſaints for having ſealed with their blood their belief in any of the jarring ſpeculative tenets of different chriſtian ſects. But this is not the only alternative, I ſpeak not of his

offer

offer to marry you, for this is only to add impiety to violence; a forced marriage is, in its beſt ſtate, no more than a legal violation: but, in the few hours between this and the time of your trial, heaven may interpoſe in your behalf."

He had not time to proceed further when he and his companions were alarmed with the tranſactions which we have already related concerning de Beauvais and la Perriere drawing lots for their lives. As they were ſeparated from the place in which theſe unfortunate friends were, only by the curtain of the tent, they could hear every thing diſtinctly as it paſſed; and their affliction at the event cannot be deſcribed.

Julia, who ſeemed to poſſeſs at the inſtant moſt preſence of mind, cried to Olivia, "you only have influence over the captain, tell him that the unhappy de Beauvais is your brother." The hermit

approved

approved this deviation from ſtrict veracity, which ſeemed the only means of averting the imminent and dreadful evil that hung over them, and Virieux was ſent for. As ſoon as he entered, ſhe flew to his feet, crying, with all the rapidity of paſſionate invocation, "O, ſir, ſave him, ſave him, ſave that man whom you have juſt condemned, he is my brother; if you murder him what can you hope from me? what can you expect, but that I ſhall inſtantly die with grief and horror?"

"So then," retorted he, in an ironical manner, "it ſeems that I may hope at laſt."

"Hope!" exclaimed Olivia, ſtarting confuſedly, "no, no, never, I cannot, indeed I cannot."

"Indeed," replied he, drawing out the word in a taunting manner, "well, juſt

juſt as you pleaſe," continued he with an affected calmneſs, "but then you muſt not blame me for the death of your brother; recollect hereafter that it is you, not I, have condemned him to the block. If you conſent to marry me on the morrow, he lives; refuſe it, and he dies.

"O fly," rejoined Olivia, dreading that his interference might be too late, "fly to ſave him or the bloody work may be conſummated; fly, fly," continued ſhe, earneſtly waving her hand, and repeating the word, ſcarcely ſenſible what it was ſhe was ſaying.

"Well, but as to the conditions," demanded the captain tauntingly, "you ſeem willing to forget them."

"O, ſir," rejoined the afflicted and almoſt breathleſs maid, "for mercy's ſake haſten to countermand the inhuman

man order, and we will," added she faintly, and with a sigh, "talk of the conditions hereafter."

"It is well, madam," answered he, catching at her last words, "I go to save his life, but remember your promise; should you repent of it on the morrow, he survives not the instant of your refusal."

The hapless Olivia threw herself into a chair, quite overcome and almost fainting, as her unfeeling persecutor went out. She remained motionless for some moments with her hands covering her face, as if excessive anxiety had deprived her of sensation: tears would have relieved her, but her agitation was too violent to permit them to flow.

"Yes," cried she, at length raising up her head, "whatever happens I am to be the sufferer; wretched Olivia! how

miserable

miſerable is thy deſtiny! to marry at all, to marry ſuch a wretch, whoſe manners I muſt ever hate and deſpiſe, one whoſe life is a continued ſcene of violence, whoſe ſubſiſtence is rapine, and whoſe joy is blood! O, it is impoſſible!"

But this reſolution of her's ſoon gave way, when ſhe painted to her tortured imagination the death of the perſon whom ſhe loved, as the conſequence of her refuſal.

"No," cried ſhe to herſelf, "he ſhall not die: let me boaſt, that if I am not born for my own happineſs I am for that of others. Ah! de Beauvais, had heaven permitted, there was one way in which I might have been happy; but now my portion, which ever way I turn me, muſt be wretchedneſs; let me then chuſe that ſpecies of unhappineſs which is to make him happy. Yes, Henry,

Henry, thou ſhalt live, Olivia devotes herſelf the victim for thy life."

Julia and the hermit had remained during this time, giving ſilent vent to their ſympathy, in the affliction of the exalted maid; they attempted not to ſpeak to her, for they felt that her griefs were too great to admit of conſolation.

There is an awfulneſs in mighty ſorrow, which caſts a ſilent gloom on the minds of all who approach it. A perſon of genuine feelings, divines from the movements of his own heart, that all unmeaning declamation on the inutility of lamentation and the inevitableneſs of misfortune, is an inſult to the mind laden with heavy calamities; ſuch inſipid diſcourſe ſerves only to vex the heart that it is meant to quiet. The mind muſt firſt have been the phyſician itſelf, before it will admit of any medicine from the common place of philo-

ſophical

ſophical conſolation, whether the tinſelled pomp of Seneca, or the unhewn ſtoicism of Epictetus.

Virieux again preſented himſelf before our afflicted friends, to inform Olivia that he had granted a reſpite to her brother. He inſiſted upon the ladies dining with him; and they were obliged to acquieſce. Much as they were diſcompoſed, they were both driven to that cruel ſituation, which the diſtreſſed too often experience, of appearing contented with the authors of their wrongs.

When night came on, he told them that he muſt leave them to catch a prieſt to do the ſervice on the morrow, "the rogue is rich, and lives a good way off, but I ſhall make him repay me for my trouble." He then kiſſed his two captives, whoſe hearts fluttered with ſhame and indignation at the freedom; and, telling Olivia that ſhe muſt

pardon

pardon him for keeping her brother confined until the marriage ceremony was performed, he permitted them to retire with the hermit to the inner apartment; while he, with the greater part of his troop, went, as he had said, to prey upon some priest who might marry him to his unfortunate captive.

CHAP. XXXIV.

WHILE our heroines were employed in giving vent to their grief, to which the good hermit knew not how to administer consolation, providence was active for their delivery. The fellow who had originally preserved Olivia by sowing dissentions among the other robbers, and who had unfortunately detained her until the arrival of his companions prevented her liberation, had not forgotten the immense rewards which she had offered him for the recovery of her freedom. He had the command of the fellows who remained at home as guard over the prisoners

when Virieux went on his excurſion. Theſe, who were only four in number, he knew that he could eaſily diſpoſe of; and having the cuſtody of de Beauvais and his friends, he communicated his intentions to them, whom he conceived to be related to the ladies.

The gentlemen, who had paſſed their time in great anxiety, liſtened to his ſcheme with rapture, and aſſured him that the promiſed recompence ſhould be paid with addition. They contrived to ſend, by his means, a note to Olivia and her companions, informing them of the matter and deſiring them to be prepared to fly at about eleven o'clock that night.

Olivia and Julia paſſed their time until the appointed hour, full of anxiety for the ſucceſs of their enterprize; nor were the gentlemen leſs agitated; their minds were perplexed with doubts, expectations,

expectations, and wiſhes; ſcarce daring to talk, they could not avoid ruminating on the event. Hope and fear ſeemed to contend for the empire over their breaſts, and alternately to gain the victory. Such a ſtate fatigues the mind and body more than the certainty of misfortune; for as Shakſpeare beautifully remarks,

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the firſt motion, all the interim is
Like a phantaſma, or a hideous dream:
The genius and the mortal inſtruments
Are then in council, and the ſtate of man,
Like to a little kingdom, ſuffers then
The nature of an inſurrection."

The hour of eleven had now arrived, and Colombe had ſent his fellow-thieves out of the way, on various pretexts. He then releaſed the count, the chevalier

de

de Beauvais, and la Perriere, and led them to the place where the ladies and the hermit were. Big with the importance and danger of the event, the hearts of the latter fluttered so violently in their bosoms as to deprive them almost of the power of respiration, and their limbs trembled so much as to make them require the support of the gentlemen as they quitted the tent.

Colombe had provided horses; Julia mounted behind de Beauvais, and Olivia behind la Perriere, the wounded count and hermit rode on another horse, while the renegade robber, well mounted and armed, led the van of the cavalcade. They went towards the castle of Beauvais, through unfrequented and bye paths, lest they should, by any accident, meet with Virieux and his companions.

As ſoon as morning had flung her purple mantle athwart the ſky, the count de Beauvais was firſt enabled to perceive that Olivia was among the companions of his flight. He was far from having forgiven her the injury which he conceived ſhe had done him; but the mutual fellowſhip of affliction has, during its continuance, the power of conquering even inveterate enmity, and he cordially invited her, with the reſt of the company, to his caſtle. They were all too much fatigued not to accept of his proffered hoſpitality; and they at length arrived at the caſtle of Beauvais, without any material inconvenience, except that the hermit and the count had ſuffered conſiderably from the pain of their wounds.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE caſtle of Beauvais is ſituated on the declivity of an hill. It was built with all the ponderous and ſolemn grandeur of Gothic ſtate. Erected at a time when every lord was an independant prince, a tyrant to his vaſſals, and a perpetual enemy to his equals, it was made ſo ſtrong as to bid defiance to the ſudden and tranſient attacks of ſavage barbarians, whoſe ſkill in war was as confined, as their love for it was extenſive.

The jutting battlements roſe proudly above the aged trees, which had for a

feries of years vainly endeavoured to emulate in height the lofty turrets of the caſtle. In a few places a branch of ivy clung friendly to the wall, to hide the ravages of time; for the pride, as well as the poverty of the poſſeſſor, prevented him from making the leaſt alteration in its appearance.

The mote and the draw-bridge ſtill remained; the maſſy gate of the court-yard ſtill hung upon its huge hinges, "grating harſh thunder" as it opened or cloſed; even the heavy barbed port-cullis was yet ſuſpended over the dark entrance, threatening deſtruction in its fall.

As our travellers approached it, the venerable trees, cluſtered around, ſeemed to ſhed a deep and ſilent horror on the gloomy manſion; and even in the preſent times it ſtruck thoſe who paſſed near it with a faint ſenſation of that dread

which

which in the days of feudal tyranny, it uſed juſtly to inſpire. It ſeemed like the ſolitary den of the lion, who, with proud and ſavage confidence in his own ſtrength, ſpreads a deſart around him, which no one can approach without trembling.

The inſide of the manſion correſponded in its appearance to that of the outſide. The hall was hung round with muſquets and arquebuſes furniſhed with match-locks, the rooms with antique tapeſtry, and the furniture was conſtructed with a degree of ſtrength, durability, and ſize, which almoſt poſſeſſed the ſpectator with the idea that its ancient owners had been of gigantic ſtature and antediluvian term of life.

Our travellers, ſecure of their deliverance, and fatigued with their journey, retired immediately to the enjoyment of repoſe. In two days the ladies were

ſufficiently recovered to travel to the houſe of Olivia, which was at no great diſtance from the caſtle of Beauvais.

The two friends accompanied them; and, when they had placed them ſafely under the protection of Olivia's mother, returned to the caſtle, where they had left the hermit and the count, both confined with their wounds.

That of the former, which had not been in a dangerous part, ſoon yielded to the ſkill of the ſurgeon; but the count's, inflamed much by ſuch a long journey, and dangerouſly ſituated, promiſed to be very tedious, if not incapable of cure.

The chevalier was diligent in his attendance on his uncle; he felt for his pains, anticipated his wants, and mildly bore with thoſe temporary burſts of

peevishness which are incident to disease.

There is something indescribably pleasing in that tenderness and compassionate assiduity which endeavours to smooth the wrinkled bed of sickness; and the count, from having forgiven his nephew with reluctance, began now to love him with his wonted affection.

Our hero, in the mean time, made some visits to Clarange, but without la Perriere, who constantly refused to accompany him, under the pretext of attending on the wounded old nobleman during his absence. Olivia sometimes appeared to him, owing to the entreaties of Julia; but it was as seldom, and for as short a time as she could; the latter, however, resolved, both for her own sake, and that of her fair friend, to mention to him the heroic generosity of

Olivia,

Olivia, in reſolving to purchaſe the preſervation of his life at the expence of her own happineſs.

De Beauvais had not of late ſpoken to Julia on the ſubject of his paſſion, which, perhaps, ſtill better enabled her to preſerve her promiſe to Olivia of ingeniouſly pleading the cauſe of her friend. She related to him the conduct of Olivia, with the artleſs, but ſtriking colours of truth. Our hero, when he heard it, ſaid but little; he ſoon took an haſty leave of Julia, and returned to the caſtle of Beauvais, meditating on what had made an impreſſion on him too great for any ſudden expreſſion of his feelings. We have already taken notice that his love for Julia had in ſome meaſure decreaſed ever ſince the involuntary diſcovery that Olivia had made of her paſſion; and this recent acquaintance with the pure generoſity of that charming maid completed

completed a triumph over his heart which had imperceptibly begun from the firſt decay of his affection for Julia.

This is not a picture of the human heart as deſcribed in romance, but it is one copied from the archetype which nature exhibits. Love is a paſſion, in ſome meaſure, involuntary; but not ſo much ſo as is uſually imagined. Where hope has ceaſed love muſt ſoon periſh, ſince it loſes that fuel which only ſupplies its flame. And for the honour of human nature let it be ſuppoſed, that love ſometimes originates from gratitude, as a great poet nobly ſays, that

"Pity melts the mind to love."

The empire of love had never been ſo extravagant over the boſom of our hero as to deprive him of the juſt uſe of his ſenſes. He had ever been able to diſcern that the beauty of Mademoiſelle

de

de Clarange was equal to that of Mademoiſelle de Launay: the belief that the latter loved him moſt had chiefly contributed to make him give her the preference in his heart; the certainty of the very contrary induced him now to transfer that preference to her rival.

He felt all the tenderneſs which Olivia manifeſted for him, and he eſtimated that which ſhe concealed from the reluctant manner in which the ſymptoms of her love were diſcloſed. The idea that ſhe had preſerved him from death, and the opinion that he had it in his power to enſure the happineſs of Julia and his friend la Perriere, confirmed his reſolution of renouncing Julia, and making an offer of his heart to the fair Olivia.

After having ſpent the night in reflection, he reſolved to communicate this

this revolution in his opinions to his friend. La Perriere, who had determined upon ſetting out for Paris the next day, to free himſelf from a ſituation which his inability to conquer his paſſion could not but make very uneaſy, was equally aſtoniſhed and delighted with the information. It was determined by our friends, that they ſhould viſit together at Clarange in future, that la Perriere ſhould endeavour gradually to ingratiate himſelf into the eſteem of Julia, and that de Beauvais ſhould not declare his paſſion for Olivia until his friend had received from Mademoiſelle de Launay either the approbation of his ſuit or a final diſmiſſal.

The fair ſex are equally quick and certain in their penetration with regard to the paſſion of love, and the ladies could not avoid perceiving the great alteration

alteration in the behaviour of both the friends, and attributing it to the proper cauſe. La Perriere attached himſelf ſedulouſly to Julia, and that lovely girl, now liberated from the reſtraint of her former engagement with de Beauvais, gave him no reaſon to complain of her reception of his aſſiduities.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

MADEMOISELLE de Launay, had now completely recovered her ſpirits; and although, in the playfulneſs of her heart, ſhe often perplexed her lover, and ſeemed to toy with his anxiety, yet ſhe betrayed, ſometimes in moments of inadvertence, and ſometimes by deſign, that her diſpoſition was more ſerious than ſhe owned, and that ſhe ſympathized with the paſſion of la Perriere.

As for our hero, he had not the ſame reaſon to be ſatisfied with his ſucceſs. Every time that he beheld Olivia, he became

became more enamoured of her perſonal and mental charms. She was not, indeed, one that could be loved moderately; and when ſhe once made a conqueſt, the heart ſhe triumphed over could not be eaſily eſtranged from the ſervice. From every amiable action of this accompliſhed maid, our hero gathered the delicious poiſon of love; and he ſeemed now willing to make amends for the length of time he had remained ſcarcely ſenſible of her charms, by the violence with which he at preſent adored her.

But the ancient melancholy of Olivia ſeemed entirely revived. From the ardent looks of her lover, and the converſation of Julia, ſhe could not but be ſenſible that the paſſion ſhe felt for our hero was amply returned; but ſhe ſtudiouſly avoided all his efforts to ſpeak with her alone; ſhe ſeemed to manifeſt an indifference to him, that gave him even leſs

room

room to hope than more pointed ill-treatment.

It is true, if she caught his eye, she blushed; if by chance she touched his hand, her's trembled; she would sometimes look after him as he quitted the room, and heave a sigh; but these are only equivocal signs of love, which a real lover will be apt often to overlook completely, or even to misinterpret as signs of displeasure. De Beauvais now began to fear he had been too hasty in conjecturing that he had ever been dear to Olivia.

Accident, however, gave him that opportunity for declaring his passion which he had long sought for in vain. He rode out early in the morning, meditating on his situation, and his horse habitually took the road to Clarange. He arrived there some time before breakfast, and, as he was informed the family

family were not ariſen, he reſolved to amuſe himſelf in rambling about the gardens.

Olivia had alſo riſen early, for the pillow of the unhappy is full of thorns. Our hero perceived her walking towards him, and joined her; their way lay beſide the bower where Olivia had once aſked the advice of de Beauvais as to the rejection of his uncle; he ſtopped as he paſſed by it, and taking the paſſive hand of his miſtreſs, after ſome little time led her into it.

"Alas! Olivia!" he cried, "little did I imagine, that the advice I once gave here, ſhould ſo materially concern my future happineſs." His miſtreſs bluſhed and caſt her eyes confuſedly on the ground without reply; ſhe would at firſt have avoided this interview, but now it was neither in her power, nor, from the natural triumph which our feelings

feelings obtain over reaſon, perhaps in her wiſh to evade it.

"Ah! Olivia!" continued her lover, "why is that confidence with which I was once honoured by you now diſcontinued? Is it that my eyes have told the preſumptuous ſecret which has been long labouring in my heart? It is true, Olivia, that I have long felt the moſt ſincere and ardent paſſion for you; a paſſion which gratitude for the generous ſacrifice you would have made of your happineſs to the preſervation of my life has made me feel to be inadequate to the merit of its object; yet, if you permit me I ſhall paſs that life in endeavouring to requite your exalted goodneſs, and ſhall deem myſelf happy beyond the ſtrength of expreſſion."

Olivia ſeemed to heſitate as he ſpoke. Her lover pauſed an inſtant for her anſwer, and was yet afraid to receive it,

dubious

as dubious of her approbation. At length he ſaid, "I dread to aſk your deciſion upon an affair which is to determine the complexion of my life; yet I cannot leave you while I am in ſuch a wretched ſtate of uncertainty."

His miſtreſs had now collected herſelf ſufficiently to return him an anſwer. "I have long feared, chevalier, that I have been but ill able to conceal from you that you have not been indifferent to me: I will confeſs, alſo, that I have not been unobſervant of the aſſiduity with which you have treated me ſince my arrival here: I obſerved it, however, with ſorrow, becauſe I never can be your's. After what has paſſed between your uncle and me, my reputation requires that we ſhould be ſeparated for ever: I deſign to retire into a convent, and I would have avoided this explanation, at leaſt until I had aſſumed the veil; I wiſhed to ſpare both myſelf

and

and you, and I acknowledge that I came to this deciſion with reluctance. I heſitate not to make this declaration, becauſe I am ſure you muſt ſee that the heart capable of making it is alſo capable of abiding by whatever reſolution virtue induces it to take in contradiction to that inclination."

Her afflicted lover heard this declaration with the utmoſt anxiety; he would have interrupted her as ſhe ſpoke, but felt himſelf unable. There was a calmneſs and candour in her diſcourſe which convinced him that it would be almoſt impoſſible to ſhake her reſolution. He exerted himſelf, however, to the uttermoſt to induce her to it, and urged his intreaties with all the impreſſive eloquence of genuine paſſion. He ſoftened the ſympathiſing mind of his lovely miſtreſs to the greateſt degree of compaſſion for him, but her reſolution was not to be overcome. Her ſtruggles to

conceal

conceal and repreſs her emotions overcame her ſtrength, and ſhe became ſo ill that ſhe entreated her lover to conduct her into the houſe. He did ſo, although he ſtood almoſt in as much need of aſſiſtance as herſelf; and then, mounting his horſe, returned to Beauvais caſtle to relate his misfortunes to the hermit and his friend.

The former, who was quite recovered of his wound, determined to argue with Olivia, againſt a determination which he deemed unreaſonable. He went the next day to viſit her, and ſhe received him as ſhe would a father. The firſt moment that he ſaw her alone, he ſpoke to her as follows: "I have heard with the utmoſt ſurprize of your determination to retire into a convent. Had you committed any crime I ſhould approve of your reſolution. The calm of ſolitude is the moſt proper ſituation to effect a ſincere repentance in. Had you

reaſon

reaſon to be diſguſted with the world, I ſhould not condemn your deſertion of it, ſince you would only ſeek for happineſs, and if it is to be found in a deſart with innocence, why not ſeek it there as ſoon as you would in a palace. But thus, without a cauſe, in the pride of youth and beauty, to waſte your luſtre in obſcurity is idle; nay, it is, perhaps, a criminal violation of thoſe ends for which you have been ſent into the world. You plead the opinion and cenſures of mankind as forcing you to it; but do not puniſh yourſelf, my dear daughter, for another's wrong. I acknowledge, that the opinion of the world ought to be revered where it is not at war with virtue; but if we make the calumnies of the wicked, idle, and envious the ground for altering our conduct, if we permit them to affect us as a real miſery, we muſt reſign all pretenſions to ſteadineſs of mind, nay to virtue itſelf. The life of ſuch as are moſt

conſpicuous

conſpicuous would then be more wretched than that of the pale ſlave gaſping in the mine for the common benefit of all, ſince the notoriety and ſplendour of their actions give at once a more fertile ſubject, and a ſtronger inducement for ſcandal to employ itſelf. But ſuch attacks on characters really meritorious are like eclipſes to the ſun: the temporary obſcuration makes us but the more ſenſible of the ſubſequent brightneſs of that luminary. Merit, like real gold, comes forth more glorious from the hardeſt trial; it is the counterfeit alone which ſinks under the teſt. From the cenſure of the world therefore, my dear child, you have nothing to fear; a character like yours will ſoon purify itſelf from a ſpot ſo unnatural to it. If then you have no other reaſon for your conduct, why will you act ſo cruelly to your lover, nay, to yourſelf, as to ſhut yourſelf up for life in a cold ſepulchre,

alone fitted to bury alive the aged and penitent?"

"Yes, my dear ſir," replied Olivia, "I certainly have another reaſon and a ſtrong one for my conduct. What would the count de Beauvais think of his nephew if he ſhould marry the perſon whom he hates moſt in the world, and one whom, it is with grief I acknowledge, he has perhaps moſt reaſon to hate? He has already ſhewn how ſtrongly he can reſent, even when inflamed only by groundleſs and unjuſt conjectures: how much more ſtrong muſt his anger be, were he to have his ſuſpicions confirmed beyond doubt, and to diſcover in his nephew freſh inſtances of a total diſregard to his inclinations, and a contempt of that gratitude which it appears to him that he ought to feel for the forgiveneſs he has extended to him ſo recently! No, my dear ſir, I ſhould deem myſelf unworthy of the

chevalier

chevalier could I reſolve to give him a wife whom he muſt purchaſe with the loſs of his neareſt relation, and to caſt myſelf like a fire-brand amidſt the family, to kindle diſſention between thoſe whom nature intended to continue united."

"This laſt reaſon my dear daughter," rejoined the venerable old man, "is ſo perfectly juſt, that I ſhall not ſay a ſingle word againſt it. There is one thing, however, which ſtrikes me as reaſonable; it is, that you conſent to renounce your reſolution of aſſuming the veil, ſhould the old count de Beauvais conſent to the marriage. You ſeem to heſitate: ſurely I could not have made a more reaſonable propoſal."

"Sir," replied Olivia, "I would not promiſe to become the wife of Monſ. de Beauvais, even on ſuch a condition. Notwithſtanding your objections, I think

think that the neceſſity of avoiding the cenſure of the world, is a reaſon which ought to have ſufficient weight with me, to make me fix my reſidence in a convent for life."

"Nay now, this is unreaſonable," cried the hermit, riſing: "to this propoſal, you muſt aſſent before my departure from Clarange: I go for the reſt of our family, either to perſuade or elſe to teize you into it."

The fact however was, that the amiable Olivia, felt this argument in a ſtronger degree than ſhe had choſen to urge it. Independant of that reverence to the opinion of the world which women do, and perhaps ought to poſſeſs in a ſuperior degree to man, ſhe was ſenſible that her partiality for the nephew had, in ſome degree, induced her to break off the match with the uncle: while, therefore, ſhe permitted not herſelf

ſelf to gratify that partiality, ſhe conceived, that to put an end to the former intended union, was merely an act of delicacy and prudence; but to marry the nephew ſeemed to her to give that action the appearance of ſelfiſh gratification, inſtead of rectitude, and that ſhe would in reality have violated an engagement through the hope of reward, rather than through a ſenſe of virtue.

This is perhaps one of thoſe ſubtilties of a refined and delicate mind, which it creates to perplex itſelf. It is an exceſs of virtue, which will ſometimes lead into error, and often be productive of unhappineſs. It is, however, the general attendant of a diſpoſition truly good, and the conduct to which it prompts us, will always be ſure of meeting with the approbation of our conſcience. This enthuſiaſm of goodneſs which is the offspring of the fervour of youth will be gradually ſoftened and

mellowed

mellowed by the hand of age into a proper ſenſe of our duty to ourſelves, and to the world: but the perſon who, while young, never deviates from propriety through an exceſſive attachment to virtue, will, in general, ſink into ſelfiſhneſs and vice through a total diſregard of it.

The whole family did not fail to plead the cauſe of the chevalier de Beauvais, and to ſolicit Mademoiſelle de Charange to comply with the propoſal of the hermit. Her lover alone remained ſilent, filled with deſpair at her reſolution; he could only look the unutterable things that he felt.

It is difficult for a diſpoſition truly generous, to withſtand the entreaties of thoſe whom they eſteem. Olivia could not bear that all her friends ſhould part from her diſſatisfied: even the expreſſive ſilence of de Beauvais had more effect

on

on her than if he had joined in the ſolicitation. Her own heart imaged his anxiety, and pleaded his cauſe, and ſhe did not, perhaps, feel diſpleaſed to be thus gently compelled to yield her aſſent to abide by the determination of the old count.

To a lover the leaſt glimpſe of hope appears as ſtrong as certainty, and de Beauvais ſcarcely felt leſs joy at this promiſe, than if he had obtained her full conſent to the conſummation of his wiſhes.

CHAP

CHAP. XXXVII.

THE wound of the count de Beauvais had grown worſe, notwithſtanding the attention of his ſurgeon, who at length declared his fears, that the count's age was too great, and his ſtrength too much exhauſted for him to recover, and that he apprehended a mortification.

The hermit ſaw the immediate neceſſity of completing the ſcheme, which he had formed, of inducing the wounded nobleman to forgive Olivia. By the energy and pious turn of his converſation he had contrived to gain an

aſcendancy

aſcendancy over him, and he made uſe of its utmoſt influence on this occaſion. He firſt mentioned her name caſually; and, as the count grew more familiar to it, ſometimes dwelt aptly upon her virtues and her ſorrow that ſhe had incurred his diſpleaſure, and at others hinted at the neceſſity of a man in his ſituation extending a charitable forgiveneſs to all the world. By theſe means he ſo far overcame his former enmity as to obtain his conſent not only to forgive but to ſee her.

Tranſported at this revolution in the mind of his uncle, the chevalier flew to Clarange, in company with his friend, to eſcort the fair viſitants to Beauvais caſtle.

Olivia, as ſhe was conducted to the bed on which the count lay, ſupported by the hermit and her companion,

bluſhed, trembled, and was extremely agitated. Cordiality could not be ſuppoſed to mingle in her reception by this relenting nobleman, but he treated her with great politeneſs. The hermit obliged her to come often into the ſick chamber to converſe with him, and as ſhe conceived that no aſſiduity on her part could be ſufficient to recompence the uneaſineſs that ſhe had once cauſed him, ſhe acquieſced with pleaſure in the taſk.

The human mind is not naturally implacable; and woe to that boſom from which the recollection of an injury cannot be blotted out by repentance and ſubſequent kindneſs!

Olivia had, by her tenderneſs and the frank avowal of her error, ſoothed the pride of the old count, and forced him inſenſibly to eſteem her. When the hermit

hermit perceived this, he took the opportunity of relating to him, one day when they were alone, the adventures of Olivia and his nephew; he pointed out the growth and progreſs of their affection carefully, ſhewing that it commenced long poſterior to the breaking off of the marriage between the uncle and Olivia; he endeavoured artfully to engage his pride and generoſity on the ſide of our lovers, by mentioning the reſolution of Olivia never to become the wife of the chevalier without his conſent, and to ſpend her life in a convent if it could not be obtained; he then dwelt upon the perfections of his nephew and Olivia, and hinted how much it muſt contribute to his own felicity to ſee ſuch a young man the heir of his honours, happily married and fully ſettled.

Having

Having gone thus far, he dropped the converſation and left the count to ruminate on what he had ſaid; not a little dubious of the effect it might have on him.

On the evening of the ſame day, Olivia, the hermit, and the chevalier, were ſitting in the count's chamber; he had remained almoſt entirely ſilent, and apparently involved in meditation ever ſince the good old man had made him acquainted with the adventures of our lovers. He now called them all to his bed ſide, and after remaining for ſome time ſilent, as if ſtill ſtruggling with contending emotions, he ſpoke thus.

"I feel how difficult it is to retreat from an opinion long entertained, but a good mind will rather overcome ſuch a petty pride than cheriſh an error which is an injury to another. That I have miſinterpreted

misinterpreted the former conduct of my nephew, his subsequent affection for me has long since assured me; I am at length also convinced, that I had no right to be offended with Olivia. Encrease not my remorse, my dear child, by your kindness," continued he to Olivia, who clung affectionately to his hand, which she bathed with her tears, as she said, "that she alone was to blame."

"You must not take upon yourself a fault in which I am alone concerned. When I sought you in marriage, you were young and inexperienced; your father might then have terrified you into the disposal of your hand, but it was unnatural to expect that your affection should follow it; infatuated at the time, I mistook his approbation for yours. I conceived, therefore, that you had injured me, when you only vindicated the rights of nature, which it would have been impious

impious in you to violate, ſince to act in contradiction to the genuine feelings of your heart is to queſtion the goodneſs of God in its formation. I now ſee how much I have been to blame. At the moment of your refuſal, ſelf-love and paſſion had cloſed up my boſom from the influence of my reaſon, and it is not until lately that I have been able to view the matter in its true light; but a bed like this ſpeaks a counſil very different from the intemperate ſuggeſtions of paſſion; here there is no trifling with truth, here there is no poſſibility of ſmothering the whiſpers of conſcience. To err as I have done was perhaps natural in my ſituation; to have remained ſo long inexorable admits of no palliation; let me, however, haſten to atone for my fault. Whatever my ſurgeons may ſay to flatter me into ſpirits, I feel that nature is exhauſted, and that the meſſenger is at hand, to lead me to

that

that tribunal before which we muſt all finally appear. Two days will ſcarce be numbered when the hour-glaſs of my life will be run out. Let me ſpend this ſhort, but precious ſpace as a man ſhould ſpend it, in the reparation of thoſe injuries I have committed, and in making the virtuous happy. This good man," continued he, pointing to the hermit, "has given me to underſtand, my children, that you are not indifferent to each other, and of your reſolution to abide my determination; let me deſerve the reſpect you have ſhown to me by joining the hands of thoſe who, I am ſenſible, are alone calculated to confer that high felicity on each other which both ſo eminently merit."

Very Pathetic

Having ſaid this, he took the hand of Olivia, and put it within that of his nephew. The enraptured de Beauvais,

unable

unable to contain his tranſports, fell upon his knee, alternately uttering thanks to his uncle, and kiſſing that fair pledge of his miſtreſs's which had been thus ſolemnly delivered to him. Olivia bluſhed her acquieſcence to the count's dying requeſt. Her heart was full with mingled ſenſations of pity for the expiring nobleman, gratitude to the hermit, and fondneſs for her lover.

She retired to give vent to her feelings in communicating them to Julia, while the hermit and her enraptured lover, leaving the count to his repoſe, that he might recover from the fatigue of ſuch a long diſcourſe, went to acquaint la Perriere with their ſucceſs, and to receive the congratulations of one, who, in the accompliſhment of his friend's felicity, read the declaration of his own.

The

The count paſſed the remaining portion of his life in a calm, cauſed by the recollection of the good he had done, and promoted by the tender aſſiduity of our lovers. Nothing however could long keep in exiſtence the weak ſpark of life that remained: his ſenſes decayed gradually with his ſtrength, and he verified his own prediction as to the time of his death.

In about two months after the funeral ceremony had been performed, la Perriere received a letter from his father, ſtating that he was ill, and requeſting his return to Paris, where the tumults had now ſubſided. He communicated this intelligence to the new count de Beauvais, and mentioned his anxiety leſt he ſhould be thus parted from his Julia. Our lovers had ſpent this ſpace of time in all the ſoft happy intercourſe which refined ſouls feel when enamoured

ed of each other. They both pined for the completion of that ceremony which was to confer the higheſt felicity on them that human nature is capable of enjoying.

A regard to the recent death of the old count had, however, made them protract their marriage for ſome time longer; but the urgent neceſſity there was for the departure of la Perriere made them now incline to preſs its immediate completion. After ſome conſultation with the hermit, they reſolved to ſet out immediately for Clarange, to obtain the ladies conſent. Julia, who muſt either have given up the preſence of her lover for a conſiderable time, or elſe agreed to his propoſal, could not peremptorily refuſe. Olivia ſuffered herſelf to be moved by the influence of example; and the lovers, after removing the many little objections which are uſually made upon ſuch occaſions,

occaſions, obtained from their miſtreſſes a timid conſent, that, after three days, they would plight their mutual vows of love and fidelity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

WHILE our lovers were making preparations for the celebration of their nuptials, an accident occurred to the interruption of their felicity. On the night before their intended marriage, Julia and Olivia had ſate up together alone, until one o'clock.

The former had not been long gone, and Olivia was preparing to retire to bed, when ſhe fancied that ſhe heard a noiſe, as if ſomebody had walked ſoftly up ſtairs and opened the door of her antichamber. Her heart beat violently with apprehenſion as ſhe went to the door

door of her own chamber to examine into the truth of her conjecture.

She ventured to look out, but at the inſtant an armed man ſeized her, "O mercy! for Heaven's ſake have mercy!" ſhe cried, ſtruggling to diſengage herſelf from his rude graſp.

"You have nothing to fear," replied he, in a tone of voice that ſtruck terror to her heart, "your life is ſecure, but you muſt come along with me."

"Alas!" ſhe exclaimed wildly, "it is Virieux himſelf, I will not go with you, I will die before I do," and ſhe ſcreamed aloud.

"You may ſpare yourſelf the trouble of making ſuch a noiſe, madam," ſaid the unfeeling ſavage with a ſmile, "my friends have made every body in the houſe pretty ſecure by this time."

"Kill

"Kill me then alſo," ſaid ſhe, wringing her lovely hands, "rid me of my fears by death, and I will bleſs you, but go along with you I will not. O monſter of inhumanity! what have we all done to thee, that thou ſhouldeſt thus haunt us to our deſtruction?"

Virieux deſired her to be more calm, ſince no harm ſhould happen to her, but held her hands ſo tight between his, that he bruiſed them exceſſively.

Frantic with her ſituation, however, the poor innocent minded not his commands, but continued to ſupplicate the wretch to have pity on her, until ſhe ſunk down upon the floor.

While ſhe continued in this ſituation, Virieux, with a ſhrill whiſtle, called his aſſociates from different parts of the houſe, where they had ſcattered themſelves in ſearch of plunder, and, with their

their assistance, carried Olivia out of the house and placed her before him on his horse; and then, accompanied by his friend, like companions, rode off from Clarange.

To account for the appearance of this man, it will be necessary to remind the reader of his having gone in search of a priest to marry him to Olivia when she had formerly been at his cave. He was successful in the attempt, as to taking an holy father prisoner; but, having delayed a little too long at his house, the country took the alarm and pursued him; when, after an obstinate resistance, he was obliged to fly, much wounded, and in company with only three of his attendants. His horse had taken the road to the castle of Beauvais, in the thick woods around which he conceived that he could most easily conceal himself.

Having

Having arrived there without meeting with any accident, he got his wound dreſſed by his companions. While they were thus buſied, they imagined that a body of their enemies were approaching, and immediately, deſerting their captain, fled to preſerve themſelves.

He, being too much exhauſted to follow them, thruſt himſelf into a large brake of thorns, to eſcape detection. He was much ſurpriſed to find, on his getting through it, a deſcent downward, as if into a cave.

Rejoiced at the diſcovery of ſuch an aſylum, upon the return of his men, who had only been ſcared away by a falſe alarm originating from their own fears, he ordered them to aſſiſt him in examining it. Having ſtruck a fire with the flint of one of their fuſees ſome gunpowder and dried graſs which the ground ſupplied in abundance, they

lighted

lighted at it ſome torches, which they had made out of an unctuous wood which the foreſt yielded.

Thus accommodated they entered the mouth of the cavern, and, after a winding and gradually ſloping deſcent of conſiderable length, were ſurpriſed to find themſelves ſtopped in their progreſs by a large iron door. It was not faſtened, and having moved it on its ruſted hinges, not without ſome difficulty, they paſſed through it into a large apartment, hewn out of the ſolid rock, which led into others equally rudely formed, immenſe in ſize, and many in number.

In ſhort, it ſeemed to them either ſome ancient temple in which the druids uſed to perform their horrid human ſacrifices, or elſe a place fabricated to preſerve the people of the country and

their property from being carried off by the incurſions of an enemy.

As it appeared at preſent, however, to be entirely neglected and forgotten, the robbers were happy to alight upon it as a place of protection. Hence they iſſued out at the dead of the night, and ſoon ſupplied themſelves, by plundering the people around them, with every neceſſary and convenience to make their retreat commodious.

Virieux, whoſe defeats and misfortunes had rendered him vindictive and ſanguinary to the greateſt degree, ſeldom ſpared a life that came in his power. As he was extremely cunning, he uſed to go out often in diſguiſe, after he was recovered of his wounds, to diſcover where he ſhould be likely to commit his ravages with ſucceſs. He had, on that very day, obſerved Olivia, as he was wandering in the diſguiſe of a beg-

gar,

gar, and, being ſtill extremely fond of her, he determined to break open her houſe, and carry her off forcibly to his cavern.

When the lady recovered herſelf a little, and ſaw how ſhe was carried through a loneſome wood, in the power of a villain, ſhe ſcreamed aloud, and Virieux endeavoured to prevent her by ſtopping her mouth with an handkerchief, which he did with ſuch a roughneſs as to injure her lovely lips and make them bleed.

He ſoon arrived at the mouth of the cavern, and forced her into it. She now gave herſelf up as loſt, and all that ſhe could do was to lift up her eyes in anxious ſupplication to the Author of mercy. Every thing around her ſerved to augment her terrors and make her abandon herſelf to deſpair. When the iron gate cloſed upon them, it ſeemed to ſhut out

every

every gleam of hope from her ſoul. The echoes that enſued as it was ſhutting, rang through the vaulted caverns like ſucceſſive peals of thunder, and ſeemed to pronounce her ruin in ſupernatural ſounds. The noiſe of their feet, as they touched the ground, ſeemed to double the number of thoſe who conveyed her. By the dim light of a ſingle torch ſhe could juſt ſee the lofty roof of the apartment into which ſhe was brought, which ſeemed compoſed of huge rocks flung on each other with unſkilful force, and almoſt falling upon thoſe who ventured beneath their immenſe maſſes.

But even ſuch objects of terror loſt all their power to move her: it was not theſe that made her ſhudder for her fate, but the horrid looks of the villains who ſurrounded her, and the remorſeleſs exultation of their leader. Alone, among ſuch wretches, without any means of protection from their lawleſs

paſſions,

paſſions, ſhe could hope no relief from the cruel deſtiny which ſeemed juſt ready to fix its iron hand on her.

"Now," ſaid Virieux to the afflicted lady, "you ſhall not eſcape me: what ſtratagem have you now that can deliver you from my arms?"

Olivia called for pity from him, in terms that would have moved any perſon whoſe heart was not dead to every gentle feeling. She entreated his mercy in the humbleſt language, and, falling at the barbarian's feet, bathed them with her tears.

The only reply that he made, was to raviſh a kiſs from her.

"Inſolent villain!" cried Olivia, unable to conceal her indignation, "my ſoul diſdains thee."

"Well,"

"Well," rejoined he, "see, my haughty fair, how much is to be gained by this conduct," and, making a signal to his men to quit the room, he seized her in his arms.

But she, slipping down from between them, fell on her knees, again to supplicate for mercy. The unfeeling wretch, deaf to her cries, and entreaties that he would take her life but preserve her honour, would have proceeded, in defiance of her struggles, had not one of his men hastily entered the place and told him, in a panic, that they were certainly betrayed, for that a number of people were in the cave.

Virieux started at the intelligence, appalled at being thus surprised in the midst of guilt, and went out to examine into the truth of their report. "Here," cried they, "it is this way that we heard a loud noise, leading towards the upper

upper end of the cavern." Their captain ordered them to extinguish the lights, knowing that it would be easier for him thus to observe his enemies if they carried torches along with them, and that they should remain undiscovered by this mean.

While the robbers were thus employed, Olivia gave thanks to heaven for her temporary deliverance. Deriving courage from her desperate situation, she resolved to attempt her escape in the present moment of confusion. She perceived that the villains had taken their way in a direction contrary to that which led to the mouth of the cavern, and she stole out, following the path which brought her in a streight line to it. She found herself stopped, at length, by the iron door. "It is shut," she cried, beating her heaving bosom, and stamping in despair, "it is shut, and I am undone."

Luckily

Luckily however, the robbers, having been all buſied in carrying her into the cave, had only cloſed it after them, and ſince then had forgotten to faſten it; ſhe attempted to open it, and, after ſome extraordinary exertions, with which terror nerved her arm, ſucceeded.

When ſhe had regained the open air, ſhe ſprang forward, wild with fear. Apprehending every inſtant that ſhe was purſued and almoſt overtaken, ſhe ran through the wood, regardleſs where ſhe went, and heedleſs of the briars which tore her delicate limbs as ſhe paſſed along.

Fortune, however, at length conducted her, breathleſs and almoſt ſpent with fatigue, to Beauvais caſtle. She ſounded the bell violently to awaken the family, but knew not where ſhe was. Dreading continually that ſhe would be overtaken, and fancying that ſhe heard the voices

or the footſteps of the robbers in every paſſing breeze that ſtruggled through the foreſt, ſhe called aloud for aſſiſtance, and ſhrieked in the madneſs of her terrors.

De Beauvais and his friend were alarmed at the ſounds of diſtreſs, and both ſprang up: de Beauvais, however, gained the gate firſt, and, as he was removing the bolts, heard the voice of Olivia crying to him for protection.

He inſtantly unbarred the gate, and ſaid, appalled, "Is it poſſible? my Olivia! and in ſuch a ſituation! Good Heavens! how is this?"

"Yes, it is Olivia," returned the diſtracted maid, clinging with wild earneſtneſs around him, and not knowing to whom ſhe ſpoke, or what it was that ſhe ſaid, "it is Olivia indeed, delivered,

miraculouſly delivered: but faſten the gate quickly or they will ſeize me, we are ſcarcely ſafe here."

She could ſay no more; her heart, which had throbbed ſo violently as to be heard and felt by her lover as he ſuſtained her in his arms, now loſt all ſenſible motion and ſhe fainted away.

Aſtoniſhed at her appearance there at ſuch an unſeaſonable hour, and terrified at her preſent ſituation, her lover conveyed her in; while la Perriere, who had by this time joined them, aſſiſted him. Some female attendants were now awakened, and Olivia ſhortly recovered. She, however, ſtill talked quite incoherently, ſupplicating Virieux in ſuch a manner as led our hero to conjecture, that he not only was the cauſe of her preſent diſtreſs, but that he had been fatally ſucceſsful in ruining all his and her

her happineſs for ever, by the deſtruction of her honour.

The attendants conveyed her to bed, while her lover remained in a ſtate of rage and jealouſy, the tortures of which nothing could equal. When his friend went to him he could not avoid communicating to him his fears. But la Perriere endeavoured to comfort him as well as he could, not forgetting to lay much ſtreſs on the expreſſions that Olivia had made uſe of, "that ſhe had been miraculouſly delivered," and this reflection in ſome meaſure quieted his apprehenſions.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

WHILE Olivia was thus providentially effecting her escape, the robbers continued listening in silence in the cave, without perceiving any light, or hearing any noise. Virieux, who had now recovered from that panick to which the bravest men are subject when their hearts are enthralled by guilt, began to curse his companions for their cowardice, and ordered one of them to light a torch and bring it to him. This, however, so great were their fears, every one of them refused to do by himself, and he was obliged to accompany them into the

the place where they uſually dreſſed their victuals.

Furniſhed with a light, they proceeded to ſearch the various caverns of the place. The noiſe again aſſailed their ears, like the clangor of a number of trumpets ſtirring up a multitude of enemies to ſurround them.

"We are all dead men," cryed one of the villains ſpringing backward, flying from the place, and again extinguiſhing the torch which he carried. Even the hair of Virieux's head briſtled with terror at the ſound; he reſolved, however, to liſten in ſilence without retreating.

He could now hear nothing except a few heavy ſighs, as he imagined, of a perſon almoſt dying. Having liſtened for a conſiderable time, he reſolved,

once

once more, to bring a torch and examine whence the noiſe proceeded, although his life ſhould prove the forfeit of his curioſity.

He found his men crouded around the fire, almoſt dead with their fears; he told them of the ſighs which he had heard, and they all immediately concluded that the place was inhabited by ſpirits, who were determined to deſtroy them for the abandoned lives that they had led.

One of the moſt timid among them went ſo far as to ſay, that he was ſure that an apparition had appeared to him laſt night as he went to fetch ſome water without a candle, that his feet were cloven, his viſage black and frowning, his ſaucer eyes glared like two comets, and immenſe volumes of ſulphureous ſmoke

ſmoke mingled with flame burſt from his mouth.

This frightful picture, which was a phantaſm merely created at the inſtant by his imagination diſtempered with terror, ſerved to augment the panick of his fellows. But Virieux, curſing him to perdition for his extravagant nonſenſe, ordered them all to take up torches and follow him, ſwearing that if one of them attempted to deſert him, even though marching into the very mouth of deſtruction, he would immediately turn about, and make ſure of the coward's puniſhment by ſhooting him through the head.

Having thus intimidated his men into obedience, they all marched forward with their ſwords unſheathed and their carabines ready cocked. But how great was their ſhame and confuſion, when,

when, after traverſing every part of the cave, they found, in one of its cells in which they had never been before, the cauſe of all their terror and confuſion, which was nothing elſe but a common aſs!

They had driven the creature into the cave the day before, laden with the goods and proviſions of ſome of the neighbouring peaſants, to whom the beaſt alſo belonged. They had tied it, in the place in which they kept their own horſes, with a rope made of hay, which the poor animal had eaten: being thus at liberty, he ſtrayed through the cave, in their abſence, and, finding at length that he could not make his way into the light, and alſo becoming hungry he had brayed; which hideous noiſe, augmented by the echoes of the various caves through which it paſſed, had ſo terrified Virieux and his aſſociates.

Their

Their attention was for a while ſuſpended from mutually reviling each other for this miſtake, by the ſight of a door ſomewhat ſimilar to that at the mouth of the cave. As this was the only door which they had ſeen fixed to any place in the inſide of this extenſive ſubterraneous labyrinth, curioſity and avarice ſtimulated them to burſt it open.

They all fancied that there muſt be an hidden treaſure concealed in it, and, although in a ſituation in which a pound weight of bread would have been of more uſe to them than all the gold of Peru, yet, (ſuch is the ſenſeleſs, but immenſe power of habitual avarice!) they reſolved immediately to break open the door, and make themſelves maſters of its ſuppoſed precious contents.

Virieux himſelf caught the infectious hope, and had already, in his imagination,

tion, by the assistance of this gold become the lord of the province. He asked, however, whether his companions were certain that they had secured the entrance into the cave, so that the lady could not make her escape?

To this they all replied in the affirmative: and indeed, such was their eagerness to gratify their curiosity and avarice in examining what was within-side of this door, that their captain might have had the several oaths of each of them, that he was himself the man who had barred it.

After a considerable number of vain efforts, they were at length successful in forcing it open, and found, to their astonishment, that it contained no treasure, but was merely a passage leading to a narrow flight of stone stairs. Virieux explored the way up them, and found them closed at the top by a wooden door.

door. Having immediately broken off the lock from this, he found that it opened inwards to the ſtairs, and that his way was ſtill impeded by ſome tapeſtry fixed ſo as to hide the door on that ſide which looked out from the ſteps.

Ordering his men to leave their torches below, he ſoon cut a paſſage with his ſword, for himſelf and them, through this ſlight oppoſition, and then found himſelf in a large chamber deſtitute of inhabitants. He next opened a door leading out of it, very ſofily, and came into the very chamber where the unfortunate Olivia had been conveyed, and where ſhe was now aſleep.

The reaſon of their coming thus unexpectedly into the caſtle of Beauvais, was, that the poſſeſſors of it having anciently found out this cavern, had made an entrance into it out of their own reſidence,

reſidence, and fortified it as we have already deſcribed, intending it for a place of ſafety to themſelves, their vaſſals, and their property in times of danger. Unwilling, however, that the exiſtence of ſuch a place ſhould be generally known, by which the whole uſe of it would be defeated, they had covered over the entrance into it from the caſtle with tapeſtry, as if it was merely part of the wall, and had hidden the other mouth of it in ſuch a rude, jagged, uncultivated place, filled with thorns and brambles, as they thought no one would be likely to approach or diſcover.

There were two female attendants ſitting in the chamber where Olivia lay. Terrified at the appearance of armed ſtrangers, they ſcreamed aloud and ran out of the room. The robbers made haſte to follow them and ſtop their cries. Alarmed at the noiſe, our two friends,

who

who had ſtill continued talking together, ſnatched up their ſwords, and flew to the place. The domeſtics of the caſtle, arouſed alſo, haſtened to the ſpot with ſuch weapons as their haſte permitted them to ſnatch up: the villains ſunk under their attacks, and de Beauvais brought down their leader with a well aimed thruſt of his ſword.

"You have conquered," cried Viricux, gaſping for breath, "you have conquered, but mine is the triumph. Your intended bride, whom, to preſerve a worthleſs life, you once pretended to be your ſiſter, lies in the cave whence I am come, mourning the loſs of that treaſure in the ſweets of which I have rioted; the memory of the tranſports I have juſt taſted with her has left your ſword no power to pain me."

Overcome with fury, de Beauvais could bear no more, but, lifting up his

ſword,

ſword, repaſſed it twice through his heart, and cloſed up his nefarious life for ever.

But the heart of de Beauvais received a wound not leſs painful, from the words of Virieux, than his had from the weapon which pierced it. "Yes villain," he cryed, "thou art revenged, compared with me thou art fortunate. Unhappy Olivia! can I wonder that thy misfortunes have driven reaſon from its ſeat? Alas! thy delicate mind was never formed to endure ſuch diſgrace! O lovely angel, who ſtill preſideſt over my boſom! what can calm the ſorrows of thy life? Fate has interwoven our felicities together; they have expired; and death is mercy to the torments which I endure."

The ſtate of the ſhepherd's mind, when he views his native plain, (once the ſeat of ſmiling innocence,) waſted by

by the desolation of the tempest, or ravaged by the furies of war, is tranquil, if compared to the agonies that de Beauvais endured. His friend led him to his chamber, while the domestics secured the two surviving robbers, and removed the corse of their leader

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

THE morning had now ariſen, and Julia and the mother of Olivia appeared at the caſtle, to communicate their griefs to the count de Beauvais and his friend. They heard the robbers carrying off Olivia, but were unable to excite their domeſtics to purſue them. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the grief they felt while they believed this lovely maiden to be loſt, nor their tranſports when they underſtood that ſhe was in ſafety.

De Beauvais, however, converted their tranſports again into diſcretion, he

induced you to credit his declaration? A ſlave to ſuſpicion muſt ever be a baſe and miſerable huſband. Come," continued the old man raiſing up his ſnowy head with exultation, and ſeeming to ſhake off the load of his years in the exceſs of his joy, " come and rejoice in the hiſtory of the reſcued innocent: I ſhould not have been kept ſo long from her chamber, had I not thought that ſhe reſerved a tale of woe for me, too ſtrong for my heart to receive, without burſting with the weight of its ſorrows." He then led the way to her chamber.

Olivia related the ſufferings that ſhe had endured on the laſt night, with artleſs dignity: while her ſympathiſing auditors liſtened with the full attention of anxious terror, until the recital of her eſcape delivered them from all their fears.

It would be vain to attempt the deſcription of our heroe's feelings: ſuffice it

to

to ſay, that his joy was as exquiſite as his grief had been excruciating. He gazed with ineffable looks of love upon his miſtreſs, as ſhe ſpoke; his ſoul ſeemed to hang upon her lips; and he glowed with rage, or melted into pity as ſhe deſcribed her own ſufferings, or her oppreſſor's cruelty.

This lovely maid ſoon recovered her health and ſpirits; and the preparations for the nuptials of the happy lovers were again renewed.

The two beauteous fair ones were led to the altar, (bluſhing like the morn,) by their enraptured bridegrooms, accompanied by the hermit and Madam de Clarange. Both of them ſhone eminently beautiful, yet without provoking a contraſt by either a rivalry in dreſs, or a ſimilarity of charms. The remainder of the day was devoted to the benevolent

benevolent purpoſe of giving joy to the neighbouring peaſants by a liberal entertainment and that courteouſneſs of demeanour which the poor prize in the rich even above liberality.

The true ſpirit of the patriarchal age ſeemed reſtored at the caſtle of Beauvais, where the lord treated his dependants with the affection of a father. The gueſts at length departed, crowning theſe nuptials with the beſt of auſpices, the bleſſings of hearts made happy by benevolence.

The wedding day has been merely the commencement of the tranſports of thoſe friends, and every hour ſeems laden with additional pleaſures for them.

Monſ. la Perriere and his Julia are at preſent in Paris: but, as his father is juſt dead, he talks of ſettling his affairs there,

and

and purchaſing Clarange, that he may enjoy the tranquil pleaſures of rural innocence, and the amiable ſociety of his friend and his lovely conſort.

Our heroe and his wife, with her mother, reſide in Beauvais caſtle. He has now, by his tender and more intimate connection with this charming woman, the means of knowing her diſpoſition more completely; and he is thus bleſſed with the continual diſcovery of new motives to admire her for every virtue which diſtinguiſhes an exalted mind, and for all that ſweet and delicate temper, that accommodating diſpoſition, which is the moſt natural, and therefore the moſt ſure foundation of the female empire over the heart of man.

The hermit alſo reſides with them. He has perceived his miſtake in judging of the general depravity of human nature

melancholy intelligence, that her reaſon was fled and her ruin accompliſhed.

Her mother fainted away. Julia ruſhed forward to the chamber where ſhe lay.

Olivia, from the ſound ſleep of fatigue, had ſcarcely been diſturbed by the irruption of the robbers, or the ſcreams of her attendants as they fled from her apartment; and attributed the noiſe ſhe indiſtinctly heard, to the deluſions of a dream.

When ſhe perceived her friend, ſhe ſtretched out her arms to embrace her, and enquired how her mother was. Julia was aſtoniſhed to perceive her ſo calm. "All is falſe that I have heard," ſhe cried in a tranſport, preſſing her hand to her boſom, "my Olivia has eſcaped from danger." "Yes," returned her

friend, "I have indeed escaped: my deliverance has been miraculous." Julia was too much affected for the situation of those whom she had left below stairs, to wait to reply, but ran on the wings of delight to remove their apprehensions. She delivered her intelligence with all that lively earnestness of attitude and language which shewed how fervently she rejoiced in the good news she conveyed.

Instigated by his fears, de Beauvais alone seemed to doubt the truth of her narration. The hermit perceiving it, said sternly to him, "the man who can for a moment refuse to give credit to the word of Olivia, is unworthy to possess her. Will you refuse to rely on what she vouches, who has given you so many proofs of an exalted soul, and yet believe the assertion of a villain, who must amply revenge his death if he can have

 induced

ture from the wickedneſs of a few individuals: and, what is more, he has ſufficient magnanimity to condemn himſelf and rectify his conduct, inſtead of perſevering in error from a vain unwillingneſs to acknowledge that fallibility which is inſeparable from human nature.

THE END.

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